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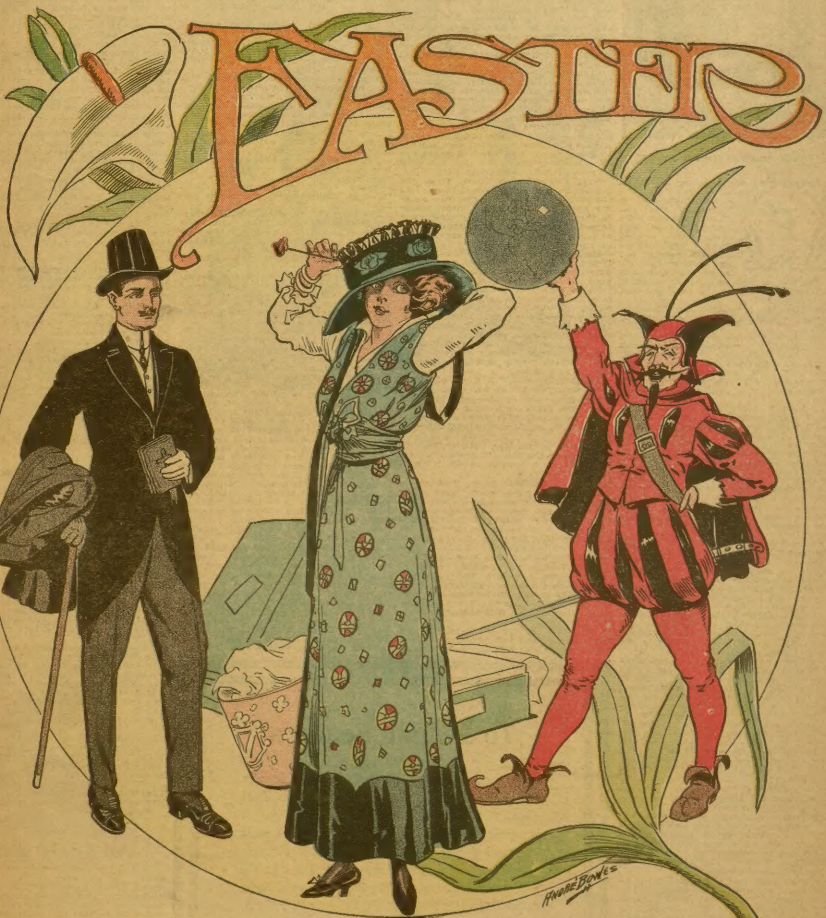
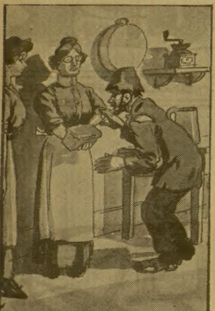

EASTER
ANDRE BOWES

Bride's Bread

By Arthur Chamberlain



"Will you eat that bread?"

FIVE large loaves of bread lay on the kitchen table under a flickering gas jet. There should have been but four, and even four seemed like a superabundance for two people, but Mrs. Colliver had followed guilelessly the recipe in the cook book, and, really, it had not seemed so much until she had come to mix it.

Besides, the bread had risen tremendously; which accounted for the fifth loaf.

Mrs. Colliver stood gloating over this, her first effort in bread-making. Gems there had been, and breakfast-biscuit, but never before had there been magnificent loaf-bread, shading from straw-color to deep yellow-brown; crusty, with all the promise of delicious crumminess within.

"I knew I could!" Mrs. Colliver whispered rapturously to herself. "Oh, it's too lovely! The very first time that Loren has had to make a business trip since we were married, last September; he'll be home tomorrow to breakfast, and won't he be surprised!"

The cook, as is well known, has leave to taste.

Mrs. Colliver cut a slice from one of the loaves with her serrated bread-knife, putting the bread to her lips in solemn ecstasy. She tasted, dropped the slice and hastily gulped down a dipperful of water.

"Why, how very queer," she murmured. "Perhaps it's because it's so hot." Once more she sampled the slice—this time gingerly, a crumb or two carefully rolled on the tongue.

Her lips trembled and her eyes filled. She gave the loaves a long look of tragic reproach.

"You're—sour!" she half sobbed. "When I've worked so hard, too, and done my very best to have you what Loren likes better than anything in the world—good, home-made bread!"

Getting no reply from the loaves, however, Mrs. Colliver laid her arm across her eyes, and a small, moist tempest ensued; after which, the air being somewhat cleared, she wiped her eyes reasonably dry on a very inadequate handkerchief, seeking to rise to the occasion.

"Loren shall never know about it, never!" she decided. "I won't have him know that I was such a little foo—fool as to spoil a whole batch of bread! Oh, dear!" There were symptoms of a relapse. "I'll just get rid of it as quick as ever I can!"

The problem, as Mrs. Colliver soon perceived, was not altogether an easy one. Five large loaves of bread—for her nibbles were a negligible quantity—occupy a certain amount of space, and one may not stow away bread haphazard; in drawers or wardrobes, for example. Bread has a tendency to grow musty and—Mrs. Colliver shuddered as she thought of it—there are mice.

Of course, every well-regulated household has a receptacle for garbage. "But that won't do," reflected Mrs. Colliver. "All the neighbors watch me, and Miss Trimberton sees everything that goes in. When she found a whole cream pie there one Monday she told me to my face that I was a bad manager and a waster of my husband's money. That was when Loren and I went off for a week-end; I left the pie in the pantry; it was only two days, but it was rather warm weather."

Having decided this point in the negative, Mrs. Colliver cast about her for some other expedient. Obviously, she could not eat five loaves of bread, sour or otherwise, before morning.

"I—I might throw it into the alley-way," she murmured to herself; "but suppose children were to find it and—and eat it? Children will eat 'most anything, if they think it's something they'd better not eat; and I shouldn't feel——" Mrs. Colliver drew a long breath, declining the responsibility.

"Perhaps I can burn it up," she reflected, glancing at the kitchen range.

She experimented with the slice. Dropping it in, she saw it frizzle, blacken and smoke; but newly baked bread is fairly moist, and it was some time before the slice turned to cinders. Mrs. Colliver sniffed; the odor from the bread was scarcely fragrant.

"It would take hours to burn up all that bread!" she decided, despairingly; "besides, the whole house would be smelly."

She turned from the range, glaring at the loaves.

"You—horrid—things!" she burst out, in futile remonstrance; not so much at the loaves as at the universe in general, when—yes, there certainly was a noise of some one furtively trying the pantry window!

Mrs. Colliver's face paled. Without a doubt—burglars! She had known that it would be burglars. What else has one to expect when one's husband goes away on a business trip? Not that one need be panic-stricken—certainly not!

Mrs. Colliver crept back from the kitchen into the dining-room, thence into the parlor, and, ignoring the door opening into a hall, which had direct access to the kitchen, she carefully closed and locked the door through which she came and dragged the heavy center-table against it.

Having secured herself in this masterly fashion from a rearward attack, she hurried to a front window, threw it open and leaned out.

Not a sign of a policeman! A small boy, far away, disappearing around a corner. Everything quiet in that little side street. Telephone? How was one ever to hold that receiver in position or make Central understand?

A tall, gaunt form tramped around an adjacent corner, coming nearer. Mrs. Colliver hastily consigned the cream pie episode to oblivion.

"Miss Trimberton!" she called, in a voice strangely unlike her own.

The figure turned abruptly, hurrying up to Mrs. Colliver's front door.

"House afire?" Miss Trimberton queried briskly, as Mrs. Colliver admitted her.

"N-o!" quavered Mrs. Colliver, looking wildly down the hall. "I could have put out a fire or—or telephoned; but it's bur-burglars!"

"Stuff!" rejoined Miss Trimberton. "Burglars before ten o'clock! Some sneak thief, maybe; or, more likely, cats! No, child, I'm not going to telephone and have everybody within a quarter of a mile with their heads out of the windows, watching the patrol wagon. Where is he? In the kitchen? I'll attend to this business, child; you stay here!"

Miss Trimberton started valiantly kitchenwards, and Mrs. Colliver, after a vacillating moment, timidly followed her. Certainty was better than suspense, and Mrs. Colliver, with all her timidity, was curious. What if it should be nothing but a cat!

"Sit still! If you start to run, I'll take you by the scruff of your neck and hold you till the police get here. And I can do it, too! Rest assured of that."

Hearing this address, Mrs. Colliver crept into the kitchen through the open hall door.

Neither burglar nor professional sneak-thief met her gaze; but a small, feeble-looking man, with a hunger-pinched face and shifting, terrified eyes sat in one of the kitchen chairs with a loaf of her bread in his hand; a tramp, undoubtedly, and in pitiful need of something to eat.

"Came in at the window because you were hungry, you say, and nobody'd give you a hand-out? Well, there's the bread; why don't you eat it?"

The tramp grinned apologetically, shaking his head. "That's some bread—some bread, lady! But—eat it? Good—night! Hunger-strike for me!"

"Well!" ejaculated Miss Trimberton, in perplexity, but Mrs. Colliver broke in:

"He mustn't—oh, he mustn't eat that bread, Miss Trimberton! I—I won't stand here and let him eat that bread!"

Miss Trimberton rounded upon the amateur bread-maker. "Now, don't you start in on hysterics!" she warned. "Why on earth shouldn't the man eat the bread?"

"It—it's sour!" rejoined Mrs. Colliver, in a whisper. "He couldn't stand it; nobody could stand it. I tasted it myself. And, oh, if I could only get rid of it before Loren comes home and knows what a—a mess I've made of it!"

Miss Trimberton picked up a crumb or two, tasted, swallowed and grimaced.

"Over-raised—that's all," she remarked finally. "'Twon't hurt him; and he deserves something for scaring you. Now, then! Will you eat that bread, or shall I send for the police?"

"Seeing 's 't ain't out-and-out pizen, lady——"

The tramp took a bite, gulped, swallowed; another, and yet another. His face flushed, his eyes grew watery.

"Sorry, lady," he murmured faintly. "Like to 'blige you, but—me for the perlice."

"Very good!" rejoined Miss Trimberton, tartly, but Mrs. Colliver drew her towards herself, whispering vehemently into her ear. When she had finished, Miss Trimberton nodded slightly. "It's not a bad idea. Besides, it's your bread, child, not mine."

Mrs. Colliver went up to the disconsolate tramp. "Will you take this bread away—all of it—in a basket, and—and put it where no one will ever get hold of it, if I'll give you a basket and—and a dollar bill?" she queried.

The tramp scrambled to his feet. "Sure thing, lady!" replied earnestly. "Where nobody 'll ever get hold of it? Say, lady, I may be down and out, but I couldn't sleep nights if I thought anybody was eating that bread!" He gave a reminiscent shudder. "Not that any human bein' would eat it," he continued meditatively, "but a dog might, and for all the worry they've made me, I ain't that crool, even when it comes to dogs."

Duly equipped with the Collivers' best picnic basket and jubilant over the dollar bill in his only whole pocket, the tramp started out through the back door.

"Now, child," announced Miss Trimberton, "just you get out some more flour and I'll be back in a minute with a rising for another batch of bread. All you'll have to do is to get up 'bout an hour ahead of time tomorrow morning, and I guess you'll have some first-rate bread all ready for Mr. Colliver when he comes home."

Miss Trimberton stalked out, and Mrs. Colliver tripped happily to the pantry. She dug down into the flour barrel, getting delightfully flushed and extremely floury; such is the exultation when defeat seems fair to end in victory. As she set the tin mixing pan upon the kitchen table there came the sudden clamor of excited voices, the back door opened with a crash, and two figures with a large basket between them hustled in, the basket opening and strewing loaves of bread broadcast ove the kitchen floor.

"Loren!" gasped Mrs. Colliver, whil a small, pale, feeble-looking man peere out from under the arm of his capto with an injured air.

"Home ahead of time, my dear Caught this rascal sneaking off aroun the corner as I came along. Knew directly that it was our basket. All this brea too! Make it yourself, I suppose? Wel I'm proud to have a wife who can mak bread—real bread! Shut up, will you?" —as the tramp attempted to expostulat "Elline, go into the parlor and 'phon the police station—I will attend to thi scamp."

"But, Loren——" protested Mrs. Colliver, only to be checked by her husband's imperative gesture.

"Don't stop to talk, Elline," he observed tersely. "Just do as I say."

Mrs. Colliver went out of the kitche in a daze; the situation was clearly beyond her. She did not 'phone the polic station, however; she 'phoned Mis Trimberton.

A sudden cry from the kitchen sen her flying back. The tramp, with bulging eyes, was seated in a kitchen chair his hands tied behind him. Somewha apart from him stood Colliver, distresse of face, glaring at a morsel of brea which he had in his hand.

"I told him, lady, 'deed I did!" th tramp sputtered. "And him using langwich that 'ud turn any crook's hai white! But he would have it! An' no you've got it an' I hopes you likes it! he added, with a savage glance at Colli ver.

"What—what does this mean, Elline? demanded Colliver, in rather straine tones.

"Oh, Loren!" Mrs. Colliver flung herself upon her husband, dropping he head upon his shoulder. "I begged hi to take it away—I paid him to take i away; it—it's sour!"

Colliver drew a long breath. "Oh, i that's all!" he ejaculated, in a relieve voice. "My precious pet! Did she g and make bread for her naughty ol hubby, and——"

"Untie me, and let me beat it!" brok in the tramp, feebly. "What with eati that bread an' the insticks of a gentle man——"

"Don't bother; I'll attend to that, came Miss Trimberton's voice from th back door. She stepped forward into th kitchen, picking up the overset baske and gathering the loaves into it. Wit one slash of the serrated breadknife sh cut the tramp's cords.

"Take it and go!" she ordered, and th tramp, snatching the basket, disappeared through the door.

"As for you two," she went on, ga ing at the young people, each of who was plentifully besprinkled with flou "you'd better go upstairs and brush o What's more, I want the kitchen to myself. Bread? Oh, don't worry abo that; I'll make that bread!"

* * *

EASTER.

A song of sunshine through the rai
Of spring across the snow,
A balm to heal the hurts of pain,
A peace surpassing woe.
Lift up your heads, ye sorrowing ones,
And be ye glad of heart,
For Calvary and Easter Day,
Earth's saddest day and gladdest da
Were just one day apart!

With shudder of despair and loss
The world's deep heart was wrung,
As, lifted high upon His cross,
The Lord of Glory hung.
When rocks were rent and ghostl forms
Stole forth in street and mart—
But Calvary and Easter Day,
Earth's blackest day and whitest da
Were just one day apart!

No hint or whisper stirred the air
To tell what joy should be;
The sad disciple grieving there
Nor help nor hope could see.
Yet all the while the glad, near sun
Made ready its swift dart,
And Calvary and Easter Day,
The darkest day and brightest day,
Were just one, day apart!

Oh, when the strife of tongues is lou
And the heart of hope beats low,
When the prophets prophesy of ill,
And the mourners come and go,
In this sure thought let us abide,
And keep and stay our heart,
That Calvary and Easter Day,
Earth's heaviest day and happiest da
Were but one day apart.

—Susan Coolidge.

* * *

All Fools' Day.

In this country persons who are deceived on the first day of April are called "April fools." In Scotland they are called "gowks," which is the old word for "fools." In France they are called April fish; that is, mackerel, because mackerel let themselves be caught so easily.

The first day of April has always been a happy day. It was the day of the spring festival of the ancient Romans. It was the end of the old New Year week festival of Europe and Colonial America, for until 1752 the year began March 25, instead of Jan.

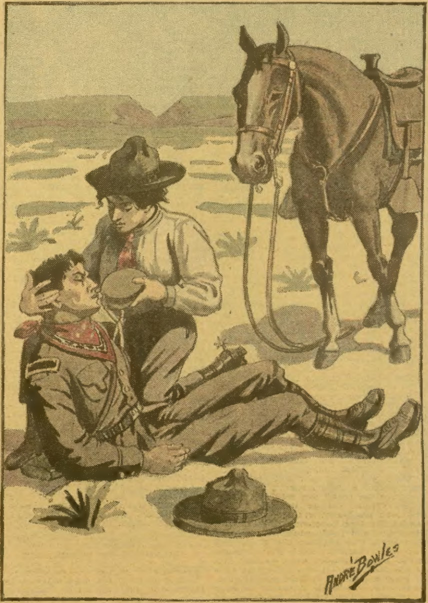
To Ledger Readers

In the next issue of the Ledger will be found a strangely fascinating story, entitled *Aaron Lapwing's Genius; or, For the Princess Herodias.* It is mysterious and interesting, involving, in a most entertaining manner, people of widely different countries and races. Be sure to read it. In the same issue a new and thrilling boys' story will begin, called *Ted of the Hills; or, Fighting Cattle Thieves.* We know that our boy readers will enjoy it immensely. Do not miss this number.

America's Secret War

Or, International Intrigue

By Marquis James



She moistened his lips.

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CHAPTER V.

WRIGHT MEETS AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

MARJORIE tore her hand loose from Wright's impassioned grip. Quick as a flash it went to her belt, her finger on the trigger of her automatic. Six shots crackled out in as many seconds. They tore through the revolver holster, but ranged harmlessly toward the sky. A horseman had wheeled to her side and seized her arm just in time to save himself from taking the lead square in his breast.

"Ah, my pretty," hissed the horseman in Spanish accents, "a desperate attempt nipped in a nick of time—and an unexpected one, too. But it is all very well—I admire spirit in my women."

"Your women!" Marjorie repeated with cutting irony. "You are presumptuous indeed, Justiniano Estopinal, that you should have the temerity to number me as one of them."

"I am flattered," observed Estopinal. "The senorita evidently knows me, but I confess myself embarrassed to return the compliment."

The Mexican paused, as one does when at a loss to recall a name, waiting for the person addressed to supply it. A contemptuous flash of Marjorie's eyes was her only answer.

"But, nevertheless, I salute you," continued Estopinal. "I salute you, and christen you for my own purposes, Senorita Obstinacy. It is a piquant name, and one suited to the senorita's disposition."

"Call me what you will," retorted Marjorie. "It makes no difference. For the time being, I am your prisoner, owing to circumstances I could not control. But that is all. As for being 'your woman,' as you say, they will bury me in the deserts of Sonora first."

Justiniano Estopinal laughed cruelly.

"We shall see, we shall see, my pretty," said he. "But tell me, by what token or turn of fortunate circumstance, do I owe it that you already know my name?"

"By the red record of your infamies, which have traveled far among a people which is determined to avenge them."

"Americans—Gringoes, you speak of, eh? What matter if we pillage their haciendas, and carry off their cattle and women alike? It will teach them to keep out of Mexico. As for threats—Bah! Gringoes are afraid to fight."

But this was a boast. Estopinal knew better. He himself had confessed that he saved his own life in a nick of time from a woman who had dared to draw her revolver in the face of another leveled at her head. But, more properly speaking, the Mexican had not saved himself. Roderick Wright had saved him from death at the hands of Marjorie Sigbee. Had Wright's restraining hand released that of the Colonel's daughter one second sooner, her bullets would have pierced the black heart of the Sonora bandit and revolutionary.

Estopinal addressed his attention to his benefactor. A couple of rurales in the leader's command had compelled Wright to dismount. One already had removed the saddle from the American's mount, and buckled it on his own horse. Another had rifled the prisoner. He had appropriated Wright's revolver, coat and hat, and was brandishing a carbine about his head, and hurling epithets in Spanish at him, while the prisoner was removing his shoes.

Estopinal delivered a harsh command in Spanish. The soldier dropped respectfully back a few paces, and transferred his attentions to Marjorie. He ordered her to dismount for purposes of safety, but attempted no liberties with her belongings. The soldier well knew his place. Women were the exclusive prize of his leader.

"Ah!" exclaimed Estopinal. "By the seven sorrows of the Virgin! If it isn't my fine friend Cunningham from Saltillo. What luck! You shall pay dearly for that trick you played on me four months ago."

Wright winced.

"I am sorry, sir. You are mistaken," he said. "My name is Wright. I am from Philadelphia. I have never seen you before. I have never been West before in my life."

"A likely story, indeed," returned Estopinal. "No doubt I embarrass you. Doubtless you would not have the senorita know your record as I do."

"My record! I repeat, there is a mistake. I am an American merchant, in the West on business. I have lost my way. I am sorry if I have trespassed and am willing to make retribution—any retribution in reason. I will pay in gold."

"Well spoken, indeed. But those words are not for my ears. You know better than to try to deceive me. That lie was meant for the senorita. You would not have her know who and what you are. If she knew what I do, doubtless she never would have been deceived into entrusting herself in your company in these parts."

Wright cast an appealing glance at Marjorie, who watched the scene with absorbed interest. A piercing, icy stare from the girl forced him to avert his eyes. The ever-watchful Estopinal did not miss this episode, nor did he fail to fathom the import of it.

"Senorita, I am a rough man," he said to her. "Those Gringo cowards call me wicked. But whatever I am, I am no hypocrite; no wolf in sheep's clothing. You may well congratulate yourself that I am your rescuer in this instance. In the hands of this dog, a worse fate awaited you than even the lying Gringoes would credit a Mexican with being capable of."

Whereupon, with an oath in Spanish, Wright lunged at the Mexican. He was quick, but not quick enough. A blow from Estopinal's clubbed revolver dropped him. The Mexican placed his foot upon the prostrate form of Roderick Wright, and drew his revolver.

"Best I'd end this dog here," he said. "If he lives, no telling what will be the result of his devilish cunning. Doubtless he was on his way to deliver you over to his agents at Torreon when I, as the agent of Providence, intervened. I happen to know that a party of his sympathizers are operating near here now."

"Don't add blasphemy to all your other crimes," retorted Marjorie, to whom Estopinal had addressed his speech.

"This dog dies," announced Estopinal, stung at the girl's retort.

He aimed his weapon at Wright's head.

"Spare him!" cried the colonel's daughter, throwing herself at the side of the prostrate man.

For Marjorie, whatever her suspicions of Wright's motives were, felt safer with him alive, so long as she was in the power of this Iago of Mexican banditry.

"I will," announced Estopinal, in the manner of one brightening under the impetus of a sudden idea. "But through no plea of yours, my obstinate beauty. I spare him at least until I can get an answer from his followers on the question of an adequate ransom. But no ransom for you, my dark eyes. There is not enough gold in the coffers of the republic to deprive me of you."

With an inarticulate groan, Wright moved in the dust and opened his eyes. He saw Marjorie's face near him, and felt the pleasing sensation of her velvet-like hand across his brow. The stupor brought on by the Mexican's blow was passing.

"Trust me, little one, trust me.," he whispered. "This bandit lies. Have faith in me, and I will bring you safely out of this at any cost."

At a time when she seemed circumscribed by enemies intent upon her destruction, this word of assurance strengthened Marjorie. Estopinal heard the American speak, but did not catch his words.

"He is able to walk now," he announced to his men. "Bring the horses here. It is getting late. We will dispose of them for the night, and go about our business.

"But tomorrow, Cunningham, I warn you," he said. "Unless your friends produce the gold your doom is sealed."

Wright was helped on his saddleless horse. Estopinal endeavored to assist Marjorie upon her mount, but for his solicitations got a sounding slap in the face. At length, the two prisoners, surrounded by rurales, moved off along the border. Presently they came upon an abandoned adobe house.

"We will leave them here," announced Estopinal. "You, Gustavo and Francisco, will guard them. Put them in separate rooms. I want no plotting. They are not to speak to one another—not to communicate by word, or sign, or gesture. At midnight we will return, and by daybreak will be forty miles from the border. Then our prisoners will be safe from both escape and rescue. At midnight, when we return, I will cause three shots to be fired upon our approach, that you may know it is I. Meanwhile, guard these prisoners with your lives. And if ransom is advanced for this Gringo, there will be ten pesos of gold, for every man in my command. Gustavo! Francisco! Guard them with your lives. Do you hear?"

"Si, jefe."

CHAPTER VI.

DOOM FIVE HOURS AWAY.

IN THE stillness and darkness of her adobe prison, Marjorie Sigbee contemplated her fate. Marjorie was more self-reliant than most girls, but in her present predicament the eternal feminine asserted itself. She depended upon the strong arm of a man to shield her. It was this sentiment that moved her to act when she saved the life of Roderick Wright.

Consequently, every thought and plan of escape her troubled mind evolved included Wright as an accomplice. This gave her pause. Could she trust him? There was much about this man she could not understand. Her mind swiftly recounted the events of the evening. Was Wright friend or foe; blackguard or a gentleman enmeshed in the web of accusing circumstance?

But events were soon to answer her questions, she reasoned. Midnight was drawing near. Doom was but five hours away. Wright, too, confined in an adjoining chamber, tried to calculate the outcome of it all. A life spent among adventurous men had taught him the lesson of resourcefulness. He had been in tight places before, but hardly any situation analagous to this one.

What did Marjorie think of it all? This was the thought that perplexed him most. Did she realize who he was? Had his disguise in coming to the post, ostensibly as the head of a tourists' party, been penetrated by this shrewd girl?

In the light of his meeting with Estopinal, who knew him as Cunningham, the name he had used when in Mexico last, did this arouse her suspicions of a plot? Did she suspect that he had deliberately led her over the border and delivered her over to the Mexicans? Would she ever love him?

Careful as his plans had been laid, he admitted that on the face of things the evidence was against him; that this episode promised to ruin everything.

The weary hours, the vehicles of doom, wore on. By the light of the pale moon that sent its beam through a little aperture in the house which served as a window, Marjorie consulted her wrist watch. She scrutinized the hand, which, like the inevitable, unrelenting, finger of fate, crawled around toward the midnight hour.

Wright, who had been despoiled of his timepiece by the Mexicans, sat on the floor in a corner of his prison, his head in his hands, thinking, thinking, ever thinking of an avenue of escape.

A wild, agonizing cry broke the stillness. In the distance, Marjorie thought she heard a pistol shot.

She rushed to the window and looked at her watch. Surely it was not midnight already, the shot being the first of three that should signalize the approach of Estopinal? It was forty minutes after eleven. Possibly, then, Estopinal had dispatched his business sooner than he expected, and was returning early.

But what was this she saw from the window? Francisco, one of the guards, was rolling about on the ground, screaming that he had been wounded, and Gustavo was crouched low to protect himself from a similar fate. His rifle was in readiness, and he scanned the moonlit horizon for the person who had fired the shot that struck his companion.

Surely Estopinal was not the man to fire upon his own men in this fashion, the girl reasoned. Presently she saw a horseman wheel from a clump of chaparral three hundred yards distant. It was not Estopinal, yet, in the semi-darkness, she could not distinguish whether he was an American or Mexican. There was a second pistol report. She heard the thump as the bullet dug itself into the ground a few feet from Gustavo. Gustavo fired also. But his shot, too, went wild, for the mysterious horseman wheeled back into the covering of chaparral.

Gustavo crawled cautiously about the

hut, but the horseman did not present himself as a target again.

Presently there were three shots in quick succession. Marjorie was at the window. She saw, riding down the trail, which ran to the right of the thicket, concealing the horseman who had dispatched Francisco, Estopinal and his dozen followers. The hands of her watch eclipsed one another on the midnight hour.

The moon had risen clear of clouds. It was almost as light as day. She watched the caravan of Mexicans wind down the trail toward the house where she and Wright were prisoners.

They reached the point where the trail ran close to the chaparral. There was a shot and a cry. The Mexican riding nearest to his leader reeled and fell from his horse. Instantly there was confusion in the bandit's company. None knew whence the shot came. The hidden horseman fired again, and a third time. Two more Mexicans dropped.

Panic spread among the bandit's followers. Two turned their horses to flee. But Estopinal's drawn revolver brought them back. For all his crimes, the bandit was no coward. He could face death and a hidden enemy with calmness.

Estopinal, by this time, had detected the location of his ambushed enemy's fire. A half dozen rifles poured their lead into the clump of chaparral. Then the Mexicans charged. Marjorie already surmised that this unknown and intrepid horseman was striving to rescue her. Estopinal likewise guessed as much. In the battle which followed, he was careful to keep between his enemy and his prisoners.

Marjorie and Wright watched from their windows the battle in which the lone horseman, at the start, was outnumbered twelve to one. From one clump of chaparral and sagebrush to another the horseman darted, shooting, and his fire had telling effect. Several of his foe were wounded. Estopinal's horse was shot under him, but he threw himself upon a mount of a wounded soldier and pressed after the elusive nightrider.

Presently the scene of the fight shifted around to the side of the house where there was no window. Marjorie could hear the exchange of shots, but could see nothing.

It seemed incredible to her that her unknown friend could win against such odds. And she knew the temper of Estopinal. He would avenge the attack which had cost him so dearly. The object of his vengeance would be Marjorie. The Colonel's daughter shuddered and shrank to the floor of her prison in horror.

A volley of shots, fired from beside the house, awakened her from her terrifying reverie. Blows rained on the door of her improvised cell. It gave way under the assault. She was on her feet in an instant, and gathered herself to resist with her last breath the attempt of Estopinal to carry her off.

But it was not Estopinal. A man in the uniform of an officer of the United States army dashed into the room and grasped her up in his arms.

"Quick, not an instant must be lost," the American gasped.

Marjorie's rescuer threw the girl astride behind the saddle on his waiting horse and vaulted into the stirrups.

Wright ran from the house, and mounted one of the riderless horses of the Mexicans.

"Duck your head," commanded the American.

But instinct had warned Marjorie in advance. Bullets whizzed by them. The soldier fired at the pursuing Mexicans as his horse galloped toward the border.

Wright was following closely. Ere they had traversed half a mile, Marjorie saw his horse stumble under him and Wright was thrown headlong. In another moment the Mexicans were on him. Again he was their prisoner. But Marjorie and her rescuer sped on. They crossed the border. They were safe. For, intrépid as he was, Estopinal knew better than to invade the territory of the United States.

CHAPTER VII.

A SOLDIER'S SECRET.

PAST the border, and the pursuit by Estopinal abandoned, Marjorie thought it strange the American did not speak. Unslackened, his horse, breathing hard and his form covered with white foam, continued to gallop on.

From the hasty glance the Colonel's daughter had obtained of her rescuer's face, she thought she never had seen him before. His voice, too, was strange. And it was not likely that he was of the border patrol, as she knew that point on the international line was unguarded from the American side.

At last she ventured to speak. To her surprise no answer came. She spoke again, and raised her voice. No answer. Finally she reached around her companion, and took hold of the reins to check the speed of the horse, which already seemed about to drop from exhaustion.

The reins fell loosely from the officer's grasp. She quickly recovered them, and with a couple of vigorous pulls brought the steed to a halt. As she did so, the officer collapsed over the pommel of the saddle. Quickly the girl dismounted. She looked into the face of the man who had saved her. His eyes were closed, but she knew she had never seen him before. He was not connected with any regiment at Fort Rosencrans.

As best she could, she dragged him from the saddle, and laid him on the ground. His coat was wet with blood. His left arm was limp. A trouser leg was stained crimson. Three of the Mexicans' bullets had passed through his body.

Marjorie felt his heart. It still beat. Quickly she detached a canteen from his saddle. She moistened his lips, and, sitting on the ground, raised his head into her lap, and with a damp handkerchief bathed his face.

Presently the eyes of the hero opened. A smile lighted his wan countenance, the lines of which still were drawn taut by pain. His lips moved as if to speak.

"There, there, now," whispered Marjorie tenderly. "Don't exert yourself just yet. Wait until I bandage your wounds."

The Colonel's daughter had visited the military hospitals. She had been an angel to the sick of the army. She had received her lessons in first aid to the injured from the surgeons.

Quickly she ripped a filmy petticoat. She made a tight bandage about the left arm just above where the bone had been shattered by a bullet. She dressed the wound on the soldier's breast and bandaged the place where a bullet had passed through the flesh of his left leg, just above the knee.

"Miss Sigbee, I——" the wounded man began at length.

"S-h-h-h, not a word just yet," cautioned the Red Cross girl. "Talking taxes your strength and lowers your vitality. You are weak yet. You must have lost much blood."

Marjorie led around the horse which had carried them to safety, and halted him in position to shield the rays of the rising sun from her patient. She unsaddled the animal and made a pillow of the saddle for the wounded man.

Although she suffered from thirst herself, she divided the precious bit of water left in the canteen with the exhausted horse and kept the rest for her rescuer. Then she sat down by the man's side, and fanned his brow with her hat, which, through some unexplainable quirk of fortune, had not been lost in the wild flight.

The wounded charge raised his feeble hand and closed it about Marjorie's. The Colonel's daughter made no sign of resistance to this liberty.

"Miss Sigbee, before I die——"

"Hush, now," the girl admonished. "You're not going to die. I—I won't let you die, my hero."

A lump rose in her throat, and she actually fancied she had squeezed the hand she held a little.

"Close your eyes now and rest. You must gather a little strength before we start for the post," she said.

The patient did as he was bidden, and soon his heavy, even breathing betrayed the fact he slept. Marjorie felt his pulse, and re-examined his wounds. The pulse was regular, the blood flow had been checked. Both were hopeful signs. Life depended upon getting him to the post hospital and under the care of surgeons at the earliest possible moment. Yet she knew it would be folly to attempt to move him until he had recuperated his strength sufficiently to stand the long ride over the hot sands.

Marjorie's mind had reverted to her companion in the adventure of the evening before—Roderick Wright. Her heart chilled as she thought of the fate that must be his after he had been recaptured by the Mexicans. She wondered if she was just in accusing him as she had to herself. Again she wondered: Was this unusual and entertaining individual a villain or a gentleman entrapped in the fell clutch of circumstance?

Marjorie waited and pondered for two long hours. She hoped against hope that some solitary traveler might be passing that way through the desert. But she hoped in vain. Her hunger was poignant and her thirst biting. Yet she would not deign to touch the few precious drops of water that remained in the canteen.

Directly, the wounded man opened his eyes again. A hint of color had returned to his cheeks. He appeared rested and stronger.

"And now, if you care to talk, you may tell me your name," said the girl. "Mine is Marjorie Sigbee—but you seem to know it already."

"My name is Ralph Guthrie," the man answered, "and, as you can judge from my uniform, I am a lieutenant in the army."

"Tell me, how did you know I was in peril? What prompted you to come to my rescue?"

"I was informed by a party of panic-stricken tourists, who in their distracted, disconnected way told me the story as best they could. I directed them back to the post according to my maps, and then started out in search of you."

"How noble and self-sacrificing and brave! True to the spirit and tradition of our glorious army. Lieutenant Guthrie, you have my eternal and undying gratitude, which indeed is miserly recompense for the risk you took and the price you have paid to save me."

"On the contrary, it was not a sacrifice at all," the Lieutenant replied. "It was my duty. My sworn duty as an officer and a gentleman."

A pause followed.

"Miss Sigbee," the Lieutenant began again, "is it true that you are the daughter of Col. John S. Sigbee, Commandant at Rosencrans?"

"I am the same," the girl replied.

"In that case I am unfortunate. If I should die——"

"There you go again, my brave soldier. Talking of dying! As your nurse, I am in command here, and I forbid you to utter those words again. My hero must not die."

"But you do not grasp the importance of what I was about to say. My death is nothing. The success of certain plans, in the carrying out of which I am but a humble instrument in the hands of the Government, however, is a matter vital to this nation. In imparting to you certain facts and instructions, can I swear you to absolute secrecy?"

"Absolute," the girl said.

"Can I swear you not to disclose these things even to your father, the Commandant?"

At this, Marjorie paused, surprised. She could not conceive of any military secret her father, Commandant of Rosencrans, and one of the most trusted men in the army, should not know. For Marjorie Sigbee was not aware of the cycles which revolved within cycles to make up the whole of that stupendous human machine—the National Board of Strategy. Guthrie was quick to note this.

"I see there are many things which you are at a loss to understand," he said. "My strength is not great. I cannot talk long. I will be brief out explicit. In the direction of military affairs of the United States, there are many things none of us understand. We must not ask to understand. We are given a task to perform. We must perform it at all hazards and ask no questions. Such is my mission to Rosencrans. Of my coming, your father already has been advised. Of the nature of my errand, he is ignorant, and must remain so. Of the underlying purpose of my errand, I, likewise, am ignorant.

"This is no reflection on your father's integrity or ability, and while I have never met him, I know him by reputation as a fearless, wise and resourceful soldier.

"I swear by one great God—the God of battles and of peace alike—that I speak the truth. At best I will be in the hospital for weeks. A duty to the flag we both adore waits a willing yet fearless hand. Have I your complete and absolute oath of secrecy?"

"You have," responded the girl in accents scarce audible for her emotion.

"Well, then," Guthrie's tones grew huskier. "Unscrew the pommel of my saddle. There, in a secret recess you will find the papers. Full instructions are on them. Follow them implicitly—and may God bless you! But most important of all——"

Guthrie gasped, and his face pictured his struggle to marshal his fading thoughts. But speech ceased. His eyes closed again. He sank from the realm of consciousness.

CHAPTER VIII.

PLEDGED TO CONSPIRACY.

THE shadow of the hand of death hung over Guthrie for days after he was interned at the hospital at Fort Rosencrans.

Marjorie was exhausted from hunger, thirst and fatigue when she arrived at the post with her unconscious rescuer. She told her story—or that part of it she was at liberty to tell without infringing on the mysterious oath she had given to the supposedly dying man in the desert. But her account left many things unexplained to Colonel Sigbee.

According to the order he had received, Lieutenant Guthrie was not due at the post for several days. Why, then, simultaneously with the time that the Colonel had received the notice of his coming which so vexed him and upset his plans, had this young officer—thought to be in New York—already been making his way on horseback and alone across the Arizona desert?

Perhaps Guthrie could explain it himself when he revived sufficiently to talk connectedly. The Colonel sincerely hoped so.

But Marjorie's recital of Guthrie's courageous rescue helped to dispel some of the prejudice the Colonel had entertained against the "green sprout of a lieutenant," as he had called him. He was at least a brave man, the Colonel reasoned. And there were always opportunities for brave men in the operations of the National Board of Strategy. Thus, each time Marjorie told her story, adding some new details of the Lieutenant's reckless daring, another degree of the Colonel's early fears faded away.

Marjorie spent much of her time at the hospital, acting as nurse to her rescuer. She felt her heart quicken with joy one day, when the surgeon told her the danger point had passed and that Guthrie would recover, though it would be a matter of some weeks before he could even leave the hospital.

Marjorie was sitting by the bedside of the wounded man, reading to him from a magazine.

"Close the door. I have something that is for your ears and yours alone," the Lieutenant interrupted.

Marjorie was taken back by this sudden request. Though he had been able to talk for some days, he had made no remark regarding the vow he had exacted of her on the desert, or the significance of the papers the girl had taken from the saddle-horn. As Marjorie closed the door, she felt a vague terror creep over her.

"Come close to me. No one but you must hear," whispered Guthrie.

"Yes," responded the girl eagerly.

"You have kept your vow?" questioned Guthrie intently.

"I have."

"And you recovered the papers from my saddle?"

"I did."

"And you have them in a safe place? Safe from spying eyes and prying hands?"

"I have."

"And you have read your instructions, and are ready to follow them?"

"No, Lieutenant, I thought——"

"What, you have not perused the papers! You do not know their vital significance?"

"No, Lieutenant, I thought perhaps——"

"Why have you not done this?" Guthrie's tone was peremptory. It was threatening. She had never heard him speak that way before.

"Why, I thought I had best wait until you recovered sufficiently to fortify me with additional instructions, if not to do the work yourself."

The excuse was a weak one. It was the flimsiest tissue of hasty invention. The real reason the girl had not looked at the papers was because she was afraid—afraid to embark in an enterprise which was to be a secret from her father. She thought perhaps the story Guthrie had told her, and the promise he had wrung from her, would prove the result of the hallucinated mind of a desperately wounded man.

"Do I understand you to infer that you are not ready to do as you promised?" Gutherie was asking.

"No, it is not that. I may be a girl and young in years, but my word is as good as my bond. But when you asked me to give that promise, you thought you were to die. I could not forget that you had just saved me from worse than death. I could not appear ungrateful, and I obeyed you. But now that you are to recover, naturally I concluded that my part in the secret affair was ended. But, of course, I shall never disclose what already has passed between us."

"Miss Sigbee," Guthrie returned in accents that sent a chill through her heart. "Your conclusion is wrongly assumed. Your part in this affair is not ended. It it not yet begun. The oath you took endures for life. You can never escape it or its obligations as long as you live."

Guthrie paused to permit the girl to grasp the full significance of his words.

"Miss Sigbee, am I to understand that you are not ready to do your sworn duty?" Guthrie asked at length.

"No, no, not that," the girl returned, too frightened to sob. "I will do what I promised. Anything! Everything! I will keep my oath."

Marjorie might not have given this answer had she not been looking into Guthrie's eyes. He had fastened his sharp, compelling gray orbs upon her as she spoke. She tried to escape their glance, but could not. They seemed to cast a hypnotic spell over her, and before she realized what she had done, she had affirmed the pledge she had made the morning after the rescue.

"That's a brave girl," replied Guthrie. His tones were soft again. "Forgive me if I spoke harshly. Perhaps I was a bit over-serious. But this is a matter of great import. But you can carry it out successfully, and everything will be all right."

"What shall I do?" the girl asked.

"What date is this?" cross-examined Guthrie.

"The twenty-eighth," the girl replied.

"My God!" returned Guthrie in agitated tones. "Then there is not a moment to be lost. Tonight you must receive and deliver the first message. Complete directions are among the papers. But the most important thing of all——"

Footfalls outside the door cut short Guthrie's speech. It was a surgeon coming to examine his patient. Marjorie passed him in the doorway.

This remarkable story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

Easter Eggs.

An amusing method of using eggs or egg-shells is to paint grotesque faces upon them. Various expressions may easily be produced by simple straight or curved lines: Calmness, sadness, gayety, pain, meditation, attention, discontent, laughter, sorrow. These simple lines can be made upon the shells with a pen or brush dipped in ink, and will cause much fun at the breakfast table.

* * *

The Master's Voice.

Mrs. Goodoldsoul was waiting tea for her husband, who was expected home from the city every minute.

Suddenly out in the road a donkey brayed. The dear old lady, who was a little deaf, beamed.

"Run and put the kettle on, Jane," she cried. "The master is coming down the street. I'd know his hearty laugh anywhere."

The Underground Trail

Or, THE LAIR OF THE MOLE

By Roger Knowles

[Coyypright 1915 by W. D. Boyce Co.]

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CHAPTER XII.

TEN minutes later, Griswold Lane was twisting himself into the letter S that admitted him to the brick wall. The bricks gave way rapidly under his spirited attack. He raised thanks to the unknown thieving contractor who had set up the wall without lime in his mortar. The bricks rattled down against the backs of the digger's lacerated hands with delightfully regular frequency. He thrust them past his chest, kicking them into the open tube with ankles and heels, making rapid progress of it. His wits were functioning perfectly; he worked deliberately, methodically, with the unremitting persistence that accomplishes all things.

The hole in the last wall widened and deepened. When he judged that he had nearly perforated the thin shell that remained between him and the final adventure, he began to proceed more cautiously. The affair must be conducted with all the stealth and secrecy of an actual jail release. It must have verisimilitude for the prisoner, and it would be fatal to alarm a guard. That would make it impossible to carry the pretense any farther with Doe.

As part of his precaution he worked more slowly and softly, picking the bricks away daintily. He took them from the narrowing apex of the conical excavation he had already made, finishing it off in cylindrical form with sufficient dimensions to admit the passage of a man. His effort was to carry the widened hole to the last bricks, so that the aperture could be completed swiftly, after the first puncture was effected.

He was scraping the mortar from between the bricks of the last tier, with scarcely noise enough to be heard by himself, when a faint warning tap sounded from within. At the same instant a brick, loosening unexpectedly, hung suspended for an instant and slowly settled into his hand, held ready for it. He could feel a cool current of air flowing onto the raw kunckles of the fingers that closed about the cube; he was through the wall. And in the same moment, with the warning tap still echoing in his ears, the entire film of wall, undermined and in delicate balance, wavered and swung inward, ready to collapse upon him with a rattle and tumult that must alarm every one within yards of the cell.

Dread of the calamity made him dizzy. He held the tottering wall braced with the back of his forearm, cramped in the hole, twisted by the act into a position that was a living torture to every bone in his back and every muscle in his shoulders and arms. He was ready to abandon everything in a sharp yelp of pain; he could not hold out long; each moment threatened to be the last. He waited through dragging seconds for the signal that would let him know all was well.

It came at last—a soft thumping on the floor. His arms were numb from their cramped exertion. He laid the brick he held in his fingers between his knees, working it carefully toward his feet along the side of the tunnel. He pulled away another brick, disposing of it as he had the last. Another, and another; picking them out with dainty adroitness, and a strength invoked by the desperateness of the situation, working them past his tortured body. His fingures moved deftly, without faltering, until he had removed the tumbling fringe, restoring equilibrium to the mass. Ten minutes more, and he was safely on the floor of the cell in the presence of the assassin, and the adventure had begun in earnest.

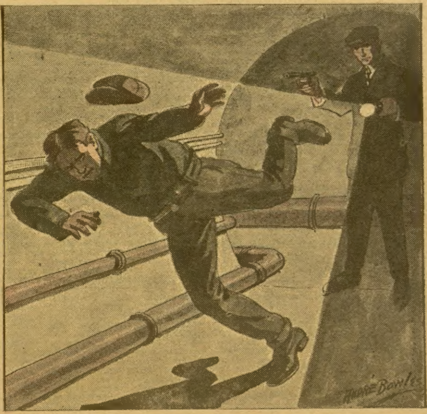
CHAPTER XIII.

FOR a moment he lay still, scarcely venturing to breathe. He had so strongly impregnated his mind with the necessity for caution, that the illusion was on him that the escape was n good faith true; that he was hazarding his liberty on a venture.

He began carefully to grope about him. His hand, worming along the floor, came to the upright post supporting the bunk. He followed the post, thinking to travel thence to the figure of the man whom he sought, and to communicate his presence to him by handclasp or similar sign.

The hand came to a stop against the bottom of the bunk. He knew then certainly that he had come out beneath it. He felt along its edge; his hand bent over and stretched across the top of the bed. He hunched his body farther along the floor, that he might reach to a greater distance, for he had so far encountered nothing that might be the man he sought.

His hand traveled to the wall, encountering nothing. The bed was empty. He scrambled to his knees in startled hurry, making more noise than was wise, and sat on the edge of the bunk, wondering. He sat in profound silence. The darkness of the cell was palpable; he could feel it pressing against face and chest. He dared not move in it; he dared not sit still. The knowledge that somewhere in that gloom there was another human being whose thoughts were tense upon him; that the blackness covered up those glinting eyes and the face of putty, snatched at his nerves.



"What's your hurry!"

A noiseless hand was laid on his shoulder, and clamped down. Through the utter blackness he looked up into two eyes that flared with a red glow so faint that it was scarcely perceptible. By the distance between them, and their size, he knew them to be the eyes of John Doe, the assassin. The hand was clenched on his shoulder with a pressure that searched his marrow. The revelation of strength in those thin, bony phalanges was astonishing.

The hand dragged him from the bunk, thrust him under it, and toward the aperture he had just completed. "You go first," commanded the voice of Doe, decisively, in a whisper.

Lane experienced a start of apprehension. Clearly the man meant to direct the escape. He had supposed that he himself, as the deliverer, would dominate the situation. To be compelled to lead might result in disaster. It would give him no chance to blaze the trail with his phosphorescent pencil, for one thing. If he should be detected in the act, the plot would be brought to ruin.

He did not stop to argue with the assassin, fearful of being overheard, and realizing the danger of arousing the other's suspicions by a protest. He could furnish no natural reason for desiring to bring up the rear. He must play the part with infallible finesse; it was no child with which he had to deal, he began to comprehend.

He crept to the hideous hole he had lately quitted. The heels of the murderer ground against the fingers of his bruised hands as he backed into the tube that had been the scene of incredible solitary labor for four days.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHERE'S the piece you took out of this tube?" came the whispered voice of Doe, when they were in the conduit.

"What do you want it for?"

"Get it, and you will see."

"We have no time to lose," protested Lane, anxious lest McInerny and the others, following prematurely, should come upon them.

"Get the piece you took out, and be quick about it!" There was an ominous ring in Doe's voice; his eyes flickered in the light of the electric bullseye, which Lane had by this time taken from its resting place and turned upon him.

"It is up the tube a little way; I'll go get it," Lane acquiesced, making the best of it. He reflected, as he crawled over the mass of bricks and mortar that he had dragged from his tunnel, upon the control of affairs the other had usurped. It was not reassuring and what did he want with the piece of iron? He hoped McInerny and the others would not start through the tunnel before he got back. He made what haste he could.

"Now get in front of me again," the assassin commanded, when he had taken the iron plate from Lane.

Lane crawled past him in the narrow passage with discreet alacrity; the present was no time to defy the man.

Doe ran a hand along the wires that striped the top of the tube. Lane, watching him, observed with astonishment that the other hand held a pair of electrician's tweezers, and that both hands were protected by rubber gloves.

"Where did you get them?" he exclaimed, involuntarily.

John Doe laughed. "When you have been in the tunnels as long as McGuire and I have, you'll know where to find things as you want them, Doctor Rochester," he replied, while his fingers were moving deftly in a task which, for the moment, puzzled Lane.

In the next moment he perceived what the assassin was about, and watched him in fascinated helplessness. Cutting off a number of wires at a distance of four or five feet from the bracket nearest the hole through which they had emerged, he stripped them carefully of their insulation, saving the material in shreds and sheets as well as he could. Having done that, he padded the edges of the iron plate with the insulation in three places, equidistant from each other. Arranging three bricks about the rim of the aperture, he placed the iron upon them, nicely adjusting the three insulated regions to rest on the bricks as supports. That done to his satisfaction, he fastened, with diabolical ingenuity, the raw and spitting ends of several of the wires to sharp points in the iron that had been left by Griswold's chisel. "Now, then," he said, when he had finished, "I am ready to go."

He had laid a death-dealing trap for pursuers. The iron plate was charged with a voltage that would shrivel the first man in contact with it, and Lane was powerless to interfere without destroying all hopes of bringing his plans to a successful issue. That he was not willing to do. The others must take their chances; he was taking his. He backed out of the tube into the manway without a word of protest. What impressed him most was the malignant, wanton futility of the trap; those intent upon following could gain access to the tunnels in a dozen other ways.

CHAPTER XV.

IT WAS four in the morning when the two stood upright and looked into each other's eyes through the interlacing rays of their electric flashlights. The gallery in which they stood was one of the main trunks of the system. It ran down town for a distance of two miles, and four in the opposite direction, toward and into the residence district of the city. It was six full feet from the floor to the top of the arched roof; Lane, by removing his hat, could walk nearly upright, having only to bend his neck to escape the ceiling. The width of the tunnel was four feet. Running through it, shoulder high, were the cables carrying telephone, telegraph and electric light wires. Gas pipes were nearer the floor; beneath them were the water mains. The air was stagnant and foul, pungent with the strangling odor of dead and leaking gas.

"Well, I presume I have done for you all that I can do," said Lane, presently, as they stood looking into each other's eyes, mutually awaiting the next move. "If you do not need me any more I should be very glad to get out into the fresh air again." If he could elude the man now, he thought, he would be able to follow him at a distance.

"Oh, but you must come and let McGuire thank you," the other protested, politely.

Lane hesitated, in doubt, not seeing the true course.

"Come," urged Doe. "We will go immediately to see him, and then you can be free for a breath of fresh air."

Lane saw the folly of obstinacy. "Very well," he acquiesced, easily. They still stood staring at each other, watchfully.

"Well, why don't you start?" demanded Doe, with a ring in his voice.

"Don't you think you had better lead?" Lane suggested. "I am not quite certain that I know my directions underground. I really don't know which way to turn."

The man who had killed the mayor gazed sardonically upon his deliverer. "Do you mean to tell me that, now you have got me here, you don't know how to find McGuire?" he quizzed.

Lane attempted the flippant. "I swear, I have been standing on one ear so long in this accursed hole that I have lost pretty much all my sense of location, and every other sense with it," he said.

"Very well," Doe rejoined. "I will direct you. You go ahead. And by the way, where is my gun? You were going to bring my gun."

Lane had not intended to bring the revolver he had promised when they planned their escape. He had labored long on an ingenious excuse for failing with the weapon, and he furnished it now, to the apparent satisfaction of his companion.

"All right," said Doe. "Then you can turn yours over to me."

"I haven't one," lied Lane.

"Let me see if you haven't," retorted the murderer, reaching out a hand as though he would make search.

Lane was heartily unwilling in the circumstances to be deprived of his weapon. "I'll be hanged if I let you search me!" he cried, simulating sudden indignation. "I've got a gun, and I'm going to keep it. How do I know that your friends are not using me for a cat's-paw to pull their chestnuts out of the fire? It begins to look like it, the way you are acting now that you are out of your cell. Why did they use me? Why didn't they get one of the gang to do their dirty work? I know why. They wouldn't give a hang if I got into trouble. They were glad enough to have me take the chances I have taken. And now that the thing is practically over you are getting ready to dish me. I'm hanged if I let you have my gun. Now, go ahead and march off to McGuire's, or anywhere else you want to go, but don't try any more tricks on me, or I'll put a stop to all your tricks." He had worked himself up to a fine appearance of resentful passion.

The other surveyed Lane coolly. "The situation has become amusing," he said. "Doesn't it occur to you that there are certain circumstances which might tend to arouse in me some suspicions of your perfect faith? I don't know you, bear in mind, although I am reasonably familiar with all in whom McGuire confides. You come to me with a yarn about McGuire, but how am I to know that you didn't pick up the name somewhere, together with enough information to enable you to attempt some trick on me with it? Although what the purpose of your trick could be, I have not the least conjecture. You dig me out of a hole, and we immediately fall to cross purposes. You fail me in the matter of bringing a gun, although you had promised it; you raise objections to ordinary precautions I take against being followed; you don't know which direction to take in order to find McGuire; you refuse to let me search you for a weapon, as a matter of prudence, and conduct yourself generally in a hostile and suspicious manner. What am I to infer? I tell you frankly that I am suspicious, and that you will have to walk straight if you wish to allay my suspicions. Now, you can give me that gun or not; but if you don't give it to me I warn you fairly that I will brain you with these pliers at the first overt act I observe. And I am a rather keen observer."

Lane thought quickly. He must at any cost preserve at least a favorable doubt in the man's mind. "I'll do this," he suggested. "As an evidence of good faith, I'll leave my gun here. That is fair, isn't it?"

"Fair as day," replied his companion.

Taking out his weapon, Lane threw it down the corridor as far as the narrow and shallow space made it possible for him to fling it, eying Doe closely as he did so, alert for any move on his part to gain the pistol.

Doe did not stir a muscle. "Now, that's all settled," he said, briskly, "and we can go about our affairs in peace. I shall have to ask you to step along, and to step lively, because the time is getting short until we shall be likely to meet some of these bothersome repair men; especially since there is something in the neighborhood that stands in need of repairing," he concluded, with a chuckle. "Step along now. That way."

Griswold Lane moved through the grim corridor, closely followed by the murderer.

CHAPTER XVI.

THEY walked at a brisk pace through the shaft behind the pushing lightspots from their lanterns, alert against being discovered by the glow, for they knew that the manways were not deserted at any time. The receding hole, brightened for a few paces in advance by the two cones of light, tapered into abysmal darkness. Shadows leaped back and forth in front as they swung along; the footing sped out of sight across the fringes of their traveling illumination. The endless wires that bound the city into a sentient unity, strung past their ears in full sound of their secret march through the bowels of the town. Lane laughed to himself quietly as he considered what a startled excitement would run among the citizens overhead if those wires could tell what was going forward within touch of them. So close was the world to a full knowledge, and yet so enormously apart from it.

Lane early made shift to flip his phosphorescent pencil into an intersecting manway. Any attempt to mark the walls for the guidance of his friends would have resulted in instant detection, and arouse suspicions hard to quiet. Everything depended on his continuing to preserve the favorable doubt.

He knew that they were moving up town, in the direction of the residence district. He was also able to tell how far they traveled, by noting the intersecting tunnels at cross streets. They had proceeded nearly a mile in this way, when his companion tapped him on the shoulder and ordered him to stop.

Turning about, he saw the other open a cupboard in the wall of the tunnel, disclosing a telephone in the light of an incandescent lamp that sprung on when the panel opened. Keeping his eye fixed on Lane, the man took down the receiver and held it to his ear. "Trunk 2332," he called.

Trunk 2332! That was a number to remember, if he ever got out of this place. Trunk 2332!

"Is this Trunk 2332?" he heard Doe's voice. "Well, this is John Doe. I am on my way home through the tunnels. Have everything working smoothly; I may have to make a quick getaway, although I don't think I shall." He smiled blandly upon Lane.

Lane overheard the exclamation of surprise that came through the receiver, and the quick question.

"You didn't know anything about it?" returned Lane's companion. "Oh, well, I guess McGuire is keeping it pretty quiet. I'll explain things more fully when I get home. Yes, I have a gun. There was one in the box, thank you. No, don't meet me. Everything is lovely, and nothing can possibly happen that any of us will regret. Quite amusing, isn't it? Sorry I shall have to wait for the afternoon papers to read about the escape of the mayor's assassin. Good-by. I'm coming right up; will be there inside of an hour."

He closed the booth, smiled blandly upon Lane once more as he held a revolver in view, and ordered him to proceed "to McGuire's." The detective did so without protest or demur. But he regretted that he had been beguiled into throwing away his firearm.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE young detective was by no means as comfortable walking ahead as he had been before Doe acquired a weapon, but he went along with an easy air of confidence and assurance. He was determined upon staying with the assassin until he was led to the place of retreat, which he now knew was hidden somewhere under the surface of the city, communicating with the tunnels. Beyond that he trusted to his luck and quick wits to bring him through.

At certain places in the manways, gates had been installed, so that sections of the tunnels might be shut off, in case of a breakage in a water pipe or a gas main which might threaten to affect the entire system. They could be operated electrically from the workshop of the tunnel company, or at the gate by means of levers and interlocking devices.

The two travelers were passing one of these gates when Doe gave the order to halt. Lane, stopping and glancing over his shoulder, saw by the light of their flashes that the other had turned toward the gate, and was releasing it from the fastenings that held it open against the side of the tunnel.

"Now what have you on your mind?" he asked, lightly.

"I think it quite as well that any one who might chance to be following us should stop right here," Doe replied. "We are getting pretty near McGuire's."

Doe occupied a minute or more in swinging the door closed and making it fast with the latching device. He asked for no assistance from Lane, and the young man offered none. Leaning against the wall of the manway, he watched with fascinated interest the deft, quick movements of the other.

Having secured the gate, Doe took the tweezers from his pocket and laid hold with them on a joint of gas pipe; a small pipe, evidently one supplying a house. With incredible strength, the man twisted the pipe from its sockets in two wrenches.

"Run!" he cried to Lane, adopting his own advice and pushing his companion ahead of him. "In about two shakes this will not be a suitable place for those whose lungs are habituated to breathing air," he said, as he pounded along the narrow way in the wake of the detective.

Lane fathomed the purpose of the act as he ran. It destroyed any remaining chance that his friends would join with him. If they should find their way that far, they could not penetrate the gas-filled chamber until the gas had been withdrawn and the leak stopped.

The two men distanced the strangling odor that gushed into the fetid air of the gallery in a short burst of speed. They had gone a block when Lane's bobbing cone of light picked up another gate, similar to the first, hanging at the side of the gallery. "Stop here," cried Doe.

Three or four yanks at the fastenings of the second door freed it from the wall. Having freed it, he produced his tweezers a second time, grasped another gas pipe in their inexorable jaws, and twisted it off by the same display of force that had astonished Lane in the first instance.. In the same breath he thrust Lane through the doorway, swung it closed, yanked it snug, and fastened it with the interlocking device on the outside. Only a faint aroma of gas seeped about its edges.

"Pretty tight fit," commented Lane, simulating complete ease.

"Yes; there's no hurry now. That won't leak much until the gallery is pretty well filled up. It ought to hold them for a while. I wouldn't like to be the first slant-headed copper to open either of those doors."

"I hope no innocent man suffers," submitted Lane.

"Innocent of what? Do you believe there are any innocent men?" was the other's rejoinder. "Come, now. It's time we were at McGuire's. There'll be a big stew here in a little while, as soon as these leaks register at the gas works. I only hope our friends the cops come poking their heads into the mess before the repair outfit arrives."

Lane desired to sound him by asking why he spoke with such certain assumption that they were being followed, but refrained.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE trick wrought a change in Lane's decision. He was alive to the obstinate recklessness of remaining with Doe until the finish, now that it was impossible that the squad should take a hand in the climax. He would accomplish nothing but his own death by such a course.

He made up his mind to elude Doe; to escape from him. He did not consider re-arresting him. He would have been willing to take a chance with an armed man if he had thought it best; he had done it before. But he wanted Doe to be free to go to his rendezvous. He hoped to be able to find the place now without a guide. It probably was not far from where they were. He made up his mind to elude his companion at the first opportunity.

Knowing that the opportunity would not present itself with a brass band and colors flying, but that he must make it, he determined to dart into the next cross tunnel and frankly run away. A few steps in front of him the light from his flash, which was now growing dim from the exhaustion of its charge, disclosed the crossing of an intersecting manway, made prominent by its mouth yawning black in the lightened walls of the one they followed. He braced himself for the attempt.

Another stride, and he was opposite the opening. He hurled himself into it with a sudden spring. With the jerk of his body his light vanished from behind the disk of the lantern. He flung it away, and leaped into the utter blackness ahead of him.

The sensation of charging at full speed into unknown blackness was not pleasant. Something dragged him by the heels, in spite of his efforts to run freely, with all possible swiftness. He remembered that some of the lesser tunnels were lower in arch; he crouched as he ran.

He had not gone more than a rod along the gallery when his companion's light wheeled in behind him, flooding the floor and walls with illumination. He waited for the sound of a shot; he could feel the man's eyes leveled along the barrel of the automatic.

"What's your hurry?" came Doe's voice behind him.

An assurance in the man's tone made Lane sensible of the futility of what he was attempting to do. He had botched it; if he was to save anything out of the mess he had made, he must be adroit. "I thought I heard some one coming, so I put out my light and ran for it," he explained.

"You did hear some one coming," the other observed. "You heard me coming. I am still coming. I thought you did not know where McGuire lived?"

"I am all mixed up," Lane assured him.

"Is that so?" Doe commiserated. "Well, perhaps you will be able to get your bearings presently."

"Are we near McGuire's?"

"We are there now," returned Doe. "Be good enough to stand where you are. We shall be inside in a moment, and you will have the pleasure of seeing your friends again."

Lane looked about him. There was nothing in sight but the interminable receding walls of the tunnel, pinching out into black gloom in either direction. If they were near McGuire's there was nothing to indicate the fact.

Glancing up and down, Lane saw Doe pass a hand swiftly along the surface of the wall, press against the flat plane at a point, and in the next moment a section of the wall receded from alignment, dropped back, and swung aside.

"Enter," invited Doe, with mocking politeness.

Lane hesitated. But the knowledge that he was on the threshold of the man's lair swept through him with a wave of exultation. He passed through the opening and struck forward along the passage to which it gave entrance. The door swung shut, and the steps of his companion echoed behind him in the hollow space.

This interesting story leads to very extraordinary situations and dramatic episodes. The reader will find it eminently worth reading to the end. Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of it.

* * *

His Wife's Joke.

"Oh, no, there won't be any divorce," said the grocer. "Wife and I won't speak to each other for the next three months, and then we'll begin to get friendly again. You see, I had changed small bills for a fifty, and when I went home that night wife wanted a new dress. I told her I couldn't afford it, as I had had a bad fifty passed on me, and when she doubted I showed her the bill. She took my word for it and said she'd wait."

"That was good for her," said the listener.

"So it was, but you wait a minute. I shoved the bill into my vest pocket and thought no more of it till next morning—April Fool morning. The bill was gone and I humped for the house like a cyclone. Had she seen it? She had. She had found it on the bedroom floor. Thank Heaven."

"That was lucky."

"And then she told me that being it was a counterfeit, and being as it was April Fool's Day, she had taken it out to the sidewalk and then watched a man pick it up. She was laughing at his feelings when he found himself stung."

"And you told her she had flung away fifty gold dollars?"

"Yes, and that her mother must go, and the hired girl must go, and we'd have to make a pound of butter do us for a week, and a hundred other things. Jumped up and down. I swore. I smashed things."

"Oh, she just called me a fool and let it go at that, and I guess she's right."

* * *

For Easter Week.

After the Easter luncheon here is a pleasant way to entertain the guests. Have a girl come in with a great basketful of eggs (paper packages of egg shape). Immediately following her comes a boy as postman, who delivers a letter to each person. Each envelope bears a number and each package in the basket has a corresponding number. Within each letter is a verse, which is supposed to describe in hidden language the gift within the egg bearing the same number. For instance, a little, silken bag full of flower seeds for one guest might have this rhyme:

"Mix me with some earth and rain,
  Give me sun and care;
Beauty then I'll give to you,
  Surely that is fair?"

Before the eggs are opened the verses are read aloud and each owner records a guess as to the nature of each gift. The one with the most complete list of guesses wins a suitable prize. An Egg Hunt is another game that affords much merriment. Little candy eggs are hidden everywhere. Each egg counts five, a certain number in little nests count twenty-five, and the finders of these are considered lucky when all the eggs are brought to "market," for the one with the highest score is the winner of some prize.

* * *

Companionable.

"There is no use denying it, all animals crave and desire human companionship!" said Muschler. "There is something pathetic about it, too.

"Every time I see a dog or a cat being chased home by a bunch of kids I feel sorry for the creature. The poor thing is all affection and wants to be with the bunch. He thinks he belongs with them. But it is 'Go home, Jack!' to the dog, 'Go home, sir!' usually emphasized with stones and sticks."

"Yes," answered Pilbert, "but dogs and cats are always more insistent when it is some place where you can't possibly take them. Suppose we all took our dogs and cats with us wherever we went. Wouldn't this be a fierce world? How would you ever hear the preacher's sermon? If we all took our pets with us the dentist's office would be so full of fur and feathers that we wouldn't be able to see."

"Fur, but not feathers."

"Yes, feathers. Birds and fowls are just as affectionate as dogs and cats, but they don't get as much of a show.

"Consider the chicken. The chicken is very fond of human companionship. The hen will come right into the midst of the family if she gets the chance. It is her instinct to do so. There is something that draws her.

"We were presented with a hen once and we put her in an improvised box to keep her until Sunday, when we were to have her for dinner. We had a number of guests at the house that very day.

"But there was no way of keeping that hen in the coop. She got out in spite of all we could do. She got out and came strolling into the living-room with her head on one side, as much as to say: 'Having quite a little confab in here, I see! I guess I'll join you. I suppose that since I have arrived the party is complete.'

"Then we all chased the chicken."

"Guests, too?"

"Why, yes. We explained to the guests that the chicken was for dinner Sunday, and you bet they helped chase their dinner. They were interested in seeing her captured. The hen enjoyed the little game of tag very much.

"The hen, having been driven out of the house, went under it. And there she stayed. There were no guests thin enough to crawl under after her. Some boys came along after a while and drove her still farther under the house. Finally one boy crawled under after her and shot her with my revolver.

"The guests were sitting around the dining-room fire talking about bombs when the boy fired on the hen right underneath them. Two fainted and three dislocated themselves when the explosion occurred.

"That hen had gotten under the dining-room, where she could hear the conversation and participate in it. That's how I happen to know that birds love human companionship."

* * *

Embarrassing.

Ellen Terry, the famous English actress, tells this story:

"Mrs. Flint came home from a call one day in such a disturbed condition that it was evident that tears were not far in the background. Her husband gazed at her inquiringly for a moment, but she made haste to explain before he could advance any questions.

" 'Well,' said she, 'I am so mortified that I don't know what to do!'

" 'What's up, little one?' Mr. Flint inquired, flippantly.

" 'I have just been calling on Mrs. Boutelle. You know her husband, Major Boutelle?'

" 'Yes.'

" 'Well, I just learned today that "Major" isn't his title at all. "Major" is his first name.'

" 'Why, sure it is. I've always known that. What is there so mortifying about it?'

" 'Nothing,' Mrs. Flint answered, with a groan, 'only that I've been calling him "Major" every time I've met him for the last six years!' "

THE STRAY BULLET

Or, ACROSS THE LINE

By HAPSBURG LIEBE

PART I.

AT THE head of a long, well-laden table in the dining-room of his new home sat Seth Walker, owner and manager of the Double-U Ranch, Texas. He had given a banquet in honor of the completion of his stately white dwelling, and gathered around the board were ten cowboys who rode ponies bearing the brand of the Double-U.

Walker surveyed them with good-fellowship beaming from his gray eyes; they had helped him through several fortunate years, and he was grateful to them in addition to their pay. The ten were strapping fellows, bronzed, long-mustached, keen-eyed men with big hearts and the characteristic Western respect for square deals.

"Boys," said the ranch owner thoughtfully, "I've got a fine home now, haven't I?"

They agreed heartily.

"But there's one thing lacking yet," Walker declared. "And I'll give a dozen good cigars to the fellow who can guess what it is!"

The ten opened their mouths in surprise. Surely, after all the new furniture that had been bought and installed there could be nothing lacking. Why, there was even a piano!

"Spider" McLean, so called by reason of his length and lack of breadth to match it, was the first to find his voice. "Say, Boss," he inquired jokingly, "you ain't bad to drink, air yuh?"

"Not specially," smiled Walker, good-humoredly. "Can't you guess what it is that I lack?"

"Nothin' but a ticket to Heaven, so far as I can see," said McLean. "'Pears to me like you've got everything right here a man could want in this vale of sorrers."

"It cain't be a distillery," ventured Tim Grigsby, grinning into his hand, "'cause the Boss don't drink a drap."

"And he's got too much sense to fool with automobiles," added a young fellow they called "Mary" Benson. "And besides that, he's the brag rider o' the borderland and got a hoss that's wo'th a dozen whizz-wagons!"

"I reckon the Boss hain't got the airyplane fever," whispered another.

"Glum" Whiteside—I would like to introduce Glum fully, but it would take a book—raised his voice for the first time that evening. "If yuh've all had yuh guess," he drawled, "I reckon it's my time. Air yuh ready to know what it is the Boss lacks for the final eelaboration of his palace?"

"We're ready, old man," said Walker. "Let's hear it."

"Boys," Whiteside went on, eying his fellows soberly, "remember the Boss is a young man. The only thing the palace lacks is—skirts."

The others looked questioningly, and it must be acknowledged a bit surprisedly, at the master of the Double-U.

Walker read their gaze correctly. "Yes," he told them, flushing slightly under his tan, "it's skirts. Glum, the cigars are yours."

For a few moments there was a silence broken only by the rattle of a knife or a fork on a dinner plate. The ranch owner could easily see that the boys knew a wife would take his comradeship from them; he knew they liked him immensely, and he saw that there was a little feeling of jealousy in their big hearts. But he knew it wouldn't last long.

"Are you fellows sorry?" he asked, so softly that they barely heard him.

The ten cowmen recovered suddenly. Glum Whiteside rose to his feet.

"Look here, fellers, the Boss deserves a better hearin' than this!" he exclaimed. "Now, I ain't goin' to call for ordinary pink-and-white school-ma'am cheers for the Boss and his soon-to-be bride, whomsoever she may be. I'm goin' to ask you to beller like bust-eyed mavericks!"

Almost did the plaster fall. And, to judge from the ranchman's face, he was well pleased.

"But we'd like to know who's to be the lucky woman." Spider smiled. "Honest, we won't tell it, Boss, if yuh don't want it told."

"That," said Walker, grinning hard, "is just what is bothering me. I don't know any women folks much but Greaser folks, having spent my last five years right here on the ranch."

"Why don't yuh take a trip East?" suggested Benson.

"An Eastern girl might not be satisfied with this sort of a life," replied Walker. "That would get me dissatisfied, you know."

"Air yuh goin' to advertise?" McLean wanted to know.

The ranchman grinned. "I don't think so," he answered.

"I know where's one o' the purtiest girls in the world," ventured Tim Grigsby, who had a fondness for dark faces, Spanish songs, guitars, fandangos and the like. "She lives in San Macati, which is a old Spanish settlement, and she's a high-grade Castilian—blueblood, yuh know. They're some educated in San Macati—talk English as good as us and better. Her name's Lucilia de Forza, and her dad's wo'th a bunch o' money. Let's see, it's four mile to the border, and San Macati is fifteen mile from there—it's only nineteen mile between her and you. I seen her at a sort of a benefit for the poor doin' at Macati when I was poundin' leather for the old Circle-O. Talk about singin', now yuh just ought to hear her get out on the Sebellana! Say, Boss," he said in conclusion, "take a look at that girl; it won't do no harm!"

The following day Seth Walker, who, like Tim Grigsby, had a fondness for dark faces, mounted his favorite mare, Babe, and rode across the border to the village of San Macati. Before going he had left word not to expect him back until they saw him coming—and then not to be surprised if they saw double. Also, before going, he had had Tim to trim his hair and cut his mustaches down to a fair imitation of the upper lip adornments of the Kaiser. Seth Walker meant to go on the wife hunt incognito.

San Macati is a village typical of those erected by Spanish hands. There is the high-belfried Catholic Church with its quaint aspect lent by the masonry of gray stone; there are the little castles of residences with their courtyards, high walls, roof gardens; the streets are marked by crosses bearing their names carved in the wood. There is one business street, which is lined closely by low, tile-roofed buildings containing stores of various kinds. Everywhere one may see growing luxuriantly the semi-tropical trees and plants common to the land.

The sun was hiding its red face under the horizon when Seth Walker, wife hunter, rode down the Calle Principe, the one business street. Loungers, men and women, glanced at him carelessly, then resumed their cigarettes, songs and guitars. Walker rode slowly to the one hostelry, Los Caballeros, and, after having been promised that his mare, Babe, should receive the best of care, went to the apartment assigned to him. There he removed the stains of travel; and he was careful in his toilet—for he was on the hunt of a wife.

After dining, during which he accepted a glass of wine with the proprietor and thereby became acquainted with him, Walker lighted a cigarette and strolled out to the street. The twanging of minor notes on many-stringed guitars fell upon his ears with a certain tinge of the romantic, a feeling that was further augmented by a musical voice singing that saddest of all songs, the Spanish Morir. The big Texan began to wonder why he had never been to San Macati before.

Suddenly a hand was placed on his shoulder from the rear, and the proprietor of Los Caballeros said courteously:

"May I trouble you one moment, Senor Marteen?"

Walker started. He had almost forgotten having put his name on the register as "Robert Martin"—to preserve his incognito while on the wife hunt, of course. But he recovered quickly. "Certainly, Senor Lasco," he said politely.

Lasco was a full-fledged Castilian. He bowed and smiled. "I forgot to tell you," he apologized, "that there is to be a baile grande at the home of Senor Juan de Forza this evening. I am always invited to be present with my friends, and I shall be pleased, indeed, if you will accompany me, Senor Marteen!"

Walker grinned in spite of himself. Now, weren't the gods playing it well! He congratulated himself on his good fortune in having made the acquaintance of the lord of Los Caballeros. Now to talk like the magazine heroes——

"I shall be delighted beyond measure to accompany the worthy Senor Lasco to the baile grande," he said, adding under his breath, "Absolutely tickled to death!" Then he asked aloud: "At what time shall we start, senor?"

"It will be an hour yet," Lasco answered, looking at his watch. "I shall be busy for almost that time, and if the senor finds that it is convenient, he may meet me in the lobby."

"Certainly," replied Walker. "I will be there. Depend upon it."

"Now," mused the Texan, immensely pleased at the thought of so soon having the opportunity to meet the Senorita de Forza, "I wonder just what his little game is—ah, perhaps he's got a salted claim to sell to me. Yes; I'll bet my hat. Just watch me buy it—not!"

He walked on until, unmindful of where his footsteps were leading him, he reached the better part of the residence section. Across the street to his right stood a great house of gray stone, a house little less than a castle, he thought. The windows were already alight with brilliant-shaded lamps, and here and there he caught a glimpse of flowers. "That's De Forza's place, I'll wager," he told himself aloud, turning to face the splendid residence; "and by the old horn spoon it's great! I wonder why I never wandered down here before."

Behind him, in a little garden of blooming things and luxuriantly growing plants, sat a girl on the edge of what had once been a magnificent fountain, preparing some kind of food. She was barely grown, slender, willowy, with a wealth of hair and a typically beautiful Spanish face. A few yards farther into the grounds rose the ruins of what had at one time been a dwelling as fine as that Walker looked upon. It might have been an earthquake; for but two rooms were left standing.

When the Texan turned to retrace his steps, he caught sight of the girl. Thinking she must have heard his musings concerning the building across the street, he raised his hat and remarked: "I was just thinking what a splendid place that is over there." He pointed. "The Senor Juan de Forza lives there, does he not?"

The girl's face clouded angrily, and the Westerner was vaguely afraid he had unwittingly hurt her feelings in some mysterious way. "Pardon me, senorita," he went on, when it appeared that the young woman did not intend to speak. "I did not know any better if I hurt you."

He started on, when the girl rose and took a few steps toward him. "Senor!" she called to him penitently, "Senor!"

Walker turned back and was standing before her in another moment.

"I did not mean to be discourteous," she appealed, blusing naively. "I was angry—so angry!—at—some one else. Yes, Juan de Forza lives there, senor. And it is really a beautiful place."

For a moment Walker made no reply. He was studying the face of the young woman before him. He was impressed—and, remember, Seth Walker was on the hunt of a wife. When he did speak, it was to introduce himself. "Martin, senorita, is my name," he fabricated.

"I am Clara de la Cruz," murmured the girl, who evidently understood that she must tell her name because the big American had told his. "I suppose," she went on, "the senor will go to the baile tonight?"

"I think I shall," said the Texan. "And of course I shall see you there. Shall I not"'

Clara de la Cruz shook her head, and a tinge of color mounted to her face. "Ah, no, senor; I cannot go," she said regretfully.

The first thought that entered the ranchman's mind when he thought of her in connection with the ball was that he would like to dance with her—for surely she could dance beautifully, he thought.

"I am indeed sorry," he began, but she had turned and fled into the doorway of the tumbled-stone house. Walker gazed after her for a moment, wondering. "Now, by all the Kings of Egypt," was his comment, "there's a bug under the chip somewhere; and I'd just like to know why such a pretty girl as that won't go to a ball!"

Then he started for Los Caballeros, for his watch told him the time he had set for meeting Lasco was at hand.

Senor Juan de Forza's home was alight from one corner to another with bright lamps and gaudily-colored Chinese lanterns, and the lower rooms were decorated with flowers. Servants, garbed in spotless white, waited eagerly to do the guests every service. There was to be nothing lacking in this affair at the house of one of the richest men in that part of Mexico. Already the local orchestra—which was no mean one, as all Mexicans are musical by nature—was bowling lazily along on La Paloma, accompanied by soft, silvery notes from a grand piano that was set in a corner of the festooned ballroom.

The master of the house, a low, heavy person with whitening hair and well-kept mustaches, bowed courteously when the American was presented to him by the lord of Los Caballeros. After a moment's passing conversation, Lasco and Walker went within, where they were very graciously received by a beautiful but over-dressed young woman. Walker knew intuitively that Tim Grigsby's princess stood before him.

"Allow me, Senorita Lucilia," said Lasco pompously, "to present to you my

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American friend, the worthy Senor Marteen! The Senorita de Forza, Senor Marteen!"

Walker took the tips of the young woman's fingers and bowed low, the while saying to himself, "Oh, if the boys could see me now!" A moment later he turned to make a casual remark to Lasco; but that obliging little man had gone, leaving him to the tender mercies of De Forza's lovely daughter.

Now, Seth Walker was a most resourceful man; and while most of his life had been spent in the saddle, he was not in the least abashed in the presence of the opposite sex. He had read many magazines, had Seth Walker, and he meant to do just like the magazine people.

"I could not refrain from accepting Senor Lasco's invitation to accompany him to your baile grande this evening, senorita," he said easily, smiling his hearty smile. "And I am glad I came; for a ball given by your charming self could not but be rarely enjoyable."

And to himself he whispered, "Oh, you Seth Walker, you!"

Lucilia was visibly pleased. Perhaps adulation was a part of her life. "Thank you, Senor Marteen," she murmured. "It is nice to hear you practical Americans say that! One more readily believes you sincere. You shall have the first dance with me for your splendid courtesy."

"I am indeed honored!" Walker exclaimed, bowing low. But he murmured aside, "What the devil am I to do with this big gun I've got in my rear trouser-pocket! What if it should fall out! Where could I put the thing! Why didn't I think to leave it at the hotel?" Aloud, he went on to the Senorita Lucilia: "I shall be delighted to have the first dance, senorita, and as many after that as you are willing to give me!"

Lucilia smiled prettily. "Permit me to introduce you to some friends of ours," she said, and Walker went along at her side to a group of well-dressed people who were chattering gaily over by a broad window.

Soon the musicians launched forth on a popular air, and, the pistol notwithstanding, the Texan claimed Lucilia's promise to give him the first dance. She rose, and they went together out on the well-waxed floor. And though De Forza's daughter was an accomplished dancer, she found no fault with the step of her tall, swinging partner.

It was a gay gathering. There were dandies attired in the showy, uniform-like clothing so characteristic of the country; there were pretty, smiling, dark-eyed senoritas; there were beautiful women and their pudgy, polite husbands. Walker never forgot it—one certain incident, in particular. But I haven't come to that, yet.

Lucilia was clearly attracted by the big, handsome Americano. And he was the happy recipient of more than his share of dances, if we may go by the looks that were aimed at him by certain men in velvet and lace, who sat with smiling lips and angry eyes and danced not at all.

They were finishing the fourth, when Lucilia gave a little sigh of weariness. "I am tired," she said softly.

"Shall we sit out the next?" asked Walker, eagerly. "And do you know of a pleasant spot?"

"I think I'd like to sit out the next," Lucilia answered. "There is a pleasant spot on the roof garden."

So they went there; and Walker would have told you, had he told you his feelings, that he was heels over head in love for the first time in his life.

The roof garden was indeed a pleasant spot. From the labyrinth of flowers in the garden below drifted up a blend of perfume that was intoxicating; in a clear sky the full moon appeared to be suspended, so near did it look; the myriad of stars twinkled like dewdrops in some great, dark meadow.

Walker leaned over from his chair and plucked a fern, which he slowly tore to bits. Suddenly he became aware that his companion was looking at him pointedly.

"It's—lovable, isn't it?" he said idiotically.

"What is lovable?" dared Lucilia. "The night, the stars, the moon, the flowers—what?"

"Everything," whispered the American, his senses enshrouded by the sweet mystery of the very air. "Everything is lovable, tonight."

"Oh!" exclaimed De Forza's daughter, sweetly—"but everything may mean so very many things, even—even——"

"Yes," Walker finished for her—"you! You more than all else!"

"Why, Senor Marteen!"

There was no anger in Lucilia's voice; rather, there was anything but anger. And Seth Walker leaned over and put his big arms about her, pressing her to his hungry, lonely heart so hard that she cried out.

"Querido!" she murmured, looking dreamily up into his face. "My big Americano!"

"Querida!" answered the ranchman, in a voice that was strange even to himself. "My little Spanish beauty!"

A few minutes afterward Seth Walker rose, surprised at himself yet glad at heart, and led Lucilia back to the ballroom. And when he looked into her dark eyes in the glow of the shaded lamps he was reminded of the waters of a lake when seen by the moon's light. A great, swelling thing came up in his throat, a thing that was very new—and very delicious.

It was in the midst of the next dance when it happened: The big six-shooter fell from Walker's pocket—there was a flash and a crash—a sudden odor of burning powder—the shrieking of frightened women, mingled with the cries of the men. In the dense smoke that surrounded him, Walker straightened up a head taller than any of them and called them back to their senses.

"Listen!" he commanded. "That was an accident, senors! I forgot to remove that revolver before leaving the hotel. I deplore it; I ask the pardon of every person in this house. I believe no one was injured; I shall never forgive myself if there has been."

Evidently no one was hurt, so far as they saw. Juan de Forza pressed forward, smiling through the scared white of his swarthy face. "It was unavoidable, Senor Marteen!" he exclaimed courteously. "Surely we do not blame you. We trust that you will forget the incident, that you visit may not be marred by the memory of it." He seized Walker's hand and wrung it heartily. Following his example, several of the other older heads offered condolence. Then the dance went on as if nothing had happened.

Walker reasoned in a sudden moment of consideration that it were better not to monopolize Lucilia's company concerning the dancing. Therefore he tore himself from her side when another guest looked his desire to dance with her, and went out alone for a smoke and to reflect.

A wide, vine-covered balcony ran around that part of the house taken up by the ballroom, and on this Walker paced and puffed and thought. Following a sudden impulse, he stepped to an open window for another glimpse of his newly found sweetheart—when he stumbled over an apparently lifeless form on the balcony floor! Quickly he knelt and scratched a match; the flaring little flame revealed the pretty face of the girl he had met early in the evening, she who had called herself Clara de la Cruz! Across her right temple was a red streak, from which blood was slowly dripping to the floor.

"Great God!" Walker exclaimed, his big voice vibrant with pain. "This is the work of my pistol! She must have been standing at the window, looking in. Poor little girl!"

This most interesting story will be concluded in next week's Ledger. Do not miss reading it. A lot of great and timely stories will appear in the Ledger during the coming months. Send in your subscription and you will find yourself repaid ten times over.

* * *

Esmeralda.

Hankins had the same feeling toward the hen that one has for a fat bank account, one's grandmother and one's wife. That is, he regarded Esmeralda with a mixture of pleasure, veneration and possessive jealousy. There wasn't a hen like her in the neighborhood and secretly Hankins was certain there wasn't her equal in the whole wide world. To be sure, there might be exhibition birds with bigger egg records—but then, if so, they lacked her super-hen intelligence; there might be smarter birds, but they failed to come up to Esmeralda's laying achievements. Any way one put it Esmeralda occupied a pinnacle in the chicken world lonely in its grandeur. With it all she was a retiring, unassuming, clucking creature who was not above her position in life as one of a small flock domiciled in Hankins' back yard. She had the modesty that is characteristic of all true greatness.

After greeting the family on his return from the city it was always Hankins' custom to proceed to the rear premises and drop a kindly word to Esmeralda. He did not even mind Loper's remarks. The Lopers, who lived next door, grew a garden and regarded hens as inventions of the evil one. Indeed, on one memorable occasion, before Hankins had got his run fenced in with chicken wire, some of his poultry invaded the Loper garden, which was then in a tender, kindergarten stage, and the ensuing battle had been hot. What Loper had threatened to do to Hankins' hens was plenty.

The Saturday when Hankins arrived home to find Esmeralda missing will never be forgotten. The rest of the chickens were browsing about contentedly, but no Esmeralda clucked back when he called. With awful forebodings Hankins peered into the alley, under the back steps, up in the air. Esmeralda was neither perched on the clothesline nor on the shingles of the sleeping porch nor scaling the roof.

She was gone.

The whole Hankins family came out to search and finally some one thought of the Lopers' garden. A concerted rush to the fence diclosed the garden all serene and untenanted.

At the farther side Loper was digging unconcernedly.

"Hey!" Hankins called, anxiously. "I've lost a chicken—Esmeralda—she must have got out of the run in some manner. Have you seen her?"

Loper turned upon him with as much coolness and dignity as gardening clothes and a hoe would allow.

"I have seen her," he admitted. Then he returned to his hoeing and spoke over one shoulder. "At present she is boiling for a fricassee on our gas stove—I hope she will not be tough."

For one awful moment Hankins stood paralyzed. It was as though some one casually had said he was boiling the baby for lunch. Loper turned again. "I told you," he stated, "what would happen if you let your infernal chickens muss up my garden! And it's happened!"

While he was still paralyzed they led Hankins into the house and locked the doors on him. When he emerged from his stupefaction he found himself possessed of words and ideas he had never suspected. His powers of invention were marvelous. In a very short time he had invoked the aid of not only the city authorities, but those of the Governor, national Congress and the President and Cabinet to put Loper in the place he belonged.

If that wouldn't do, Hankins would not stop at convening the peace convention at The Hague. Plunging the country into a copy of the European War was not beyond him. He insisted that it was not so much the hen as the principle involved, but the whole family down to Jimmy knew it was because Hankins' heartstrings were wrung.

Bereft of Esmeralda, life stretched dark and tame. He had kept her egg records for four years and now what would he do? When he was pale and haggard and calmed down to suffering submission they let him out into the back yard with his sorrow.

Loper still was digging away on the other side of the garden. Stooping, Hankins picked up a convenient brickbat. While he fingered it lovingly, eying Loper's back, he saw Esmeralda.

Her foolish head stuck out from under a four o'clock bush by the fence. In two steps Hankins found out the truth—Esmeralda was trying to steal a nest and set. Therefore, the bird that Loper had caught and assassinated must have been just an ordinary hen.

Hankins went back over all his harrowing emotion with rising wrath. Esmeralda looked up at him with a particularly foolish cluck.

"Gol darn you!" Hankins cried, in disgust. "And you weren't dead after all—making me all this trouble!"

He shied the brickbat at Esmeralda!

"Cluck! cluck!" she cried, angrily, as it grazed her tail feathers.

"Oh, cluck!" growled Hankins. "You're nothing but a fool hen like all the rest of 'em, after all!"

And Hankins strode proudly into the house. He was freed of his slavery to Esmeralda.

Courage is Common in This War.

LONDON, April 3.—Every Englishman knows how to die bravely. The Irish, Scotch and English soldiers face the bayonets, the machine guns as though out on dress parade. It is the men who sicken and die in the trenches, or at home after an arduous campaign that our sympathy goes out to most. There are thousands of such men behind the battle lines who went to the front without the strong constitution and good pure blood to withstand the deprivations, the hardships of the campaign in Belgium and France. It's a warning that we should pay strict attention to our stomach, liver and blood. If one is all out of sorts he should take an invigorating tonic and alterative such as Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery which cures diseases of the stomach and organs of digestion and nutrition. It eliminates from the blood disease breeding poisons. It makes the blood rich and pure, and furnishes a foundation for sound, physical health. Fifty years ago, Dr. Pierce, of the Invalids' Hotel and Surgical Institute, at Buffalo, N. Y., found that certain barks and roots manufactured by using glycerine without the use of alcohol or opiates, made into a concentrated extract, which he called Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery, made a stimulating tonic for the stomach, helped the digestion and assimilation of the food and eradicated poisons from the blood. This is nature's cure for indigestion, and by correcting the stomach, and thereby feeding the blood on pure materials, the red blood corpuscles are increased and the body established in a healthy state. No one suffers from catarrh who has plenty of red blood corpuscles and a good digestion. Catarrh in all its forms is a stagnation of the blood. Introduce pure red blood into the system by taking the "Medical Discovery" and health is assured.—Adv.

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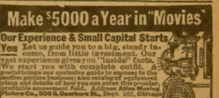

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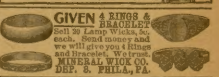

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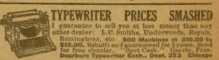

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The End of the World

Or, ON TROUBLE ISLAND

By William H. Manning

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CHAPTER X.

WHAT WAS ABOARD.

GIDEON had not undressed, and he hastily followed the mate. Haste was necessary, for Dalton, heading for the west shore, was walking at high speed.

"Is there danger?" the doctor asked.

"Wait and see."

Presently they passed the last of the trees, and the view expanded. Beyond the island the water was leaping in strong seas, but neither fog nor other obstruction shut off the seaboard. He swept that area and had a partial explanation.

"A ship driving before the wind," he commented.

"Do you see what ship?" the mate demanded.

"Why bless me! it is—but that seems impossible. All the same, it is so. That's the old sloop.'

"The Spry Shark it is!" Dalton agreed, forgetting to give the craft its new name. "It's our old hooker, adrift again, without a soul aboard, the sport of the gale. She hasn't a sail spread, but nothing made of wood can resist this blow. Her course is erratic, but, in a general way, she holds the course the wind and waves compel her to take. Isn't that astonishing?"

Gideon forgot to answer. He was gazing greedily at the sloop, eager to be on her deck with enough sailors to manage her. For the moment that all-consuming desire made him forget that her reappearance seemed little less than beyond belief.

She was not yet fully abreast the group that was watching her, but men and women were alike gathered to see their valued craft once more.

Captain Foskett was speaking when the doctor joined the group.

"I won't undertake to say whether it should be called a miracle," he said, "but we can study it all out. The Coming Day was struck by the squall from the northeast and buffeted so hard that she dragged her anchor and went adrift from here. Where she fetched to we shall probably never know, but, by some providence, she escaped the rapacious eyes of the black mariners over that way. Not going aground anywhere, she was still afloat when the southwest gale struck her, and that gale brought her back here. As far as wind is concerned, nothing odd about it, but otherwise it is astonishing."

"Captain," cried Billy Rob, "let us man a boat and go out to board her. We can do it, and soon have her anchored on the lee shore."

"No, no!" Foskett replied. "In all likelihood the boat would overturn and drown you all, and even if we did get possession of her, it would be only to burn her. It can't be, lads. Too risky!"

The point was not urged further, but the watchers grew more intent as the sloop came abreast of their position. Gideon heard a muffled sob and turned to the women. Who was so deeply affected was not plain, but their eyes coveted the sloop hungrily. He had again shifted his gaze, when his arm was nervously grasped by slender fingers, and Vashti was by his side.

"Look, look!" she cried. "There is life aboard the ship! Do you see? There, there, near the bows. Oh! do you see?"

"There certainly is a man there——"

So the captain began, but the girl interrupted.

"It is no man. Look, look! An ape is there, aboard the ship!"

A deep breath rose from the group. It was the mingled sigh of wonder of many persons acting as one. Foskett raised his glass, but his daughter reached out both hands.

"Father, let me look!" she exclaimed. "I have an idea—let me use the glass!"

He yielded, and she brought it to bear, focusing as quickly as possible. Dalton, using the second glass, was wondering at her emotion, but it was soon explained. She abruptly extended the glass to the captain.

"That creature aboard is the same monkey you carried away from here!" she announced.

"Wh-wh-what?" stammered Foskett. "My child, you dream. It cannot be. Monkeys are much alike, and the distance deceives you. Why should that monkey be aboard?"

"Why should any monkey be there?" she retorted, smiling.

"Well, you've got me there, my dear," he confessed.

The sloop was already receding, passing the island by a safe margin. It was clear that she would hold her way, driving into the northeast, and then—what then? Now, there was but that one sign of life, the monkey in the bows. He stood facing forward, grasping the nearest shrouds, and was surely an interesting passenger, though possibly not a resigned one. Accustomed to the land, he would hardly delight in being carried to sea in a gale.

The wind held, and the sloop moved, and so she passed the outermost point and drew away from land. Pitching violently she churned along in nearly a direct line, and always the monkey stood and clutched at the shrouds, eying the waters forward. No man there had ever seen the like.

"Father," said Vashti, with a prefatory laugh, "the ape you carried away did not like his new quarters, so he chartered the sloop to come back here."

"I admit," replied Foskett, smiling appreciatively, "all things are possible, and I can't prove that you are wrong, but I question that your eyes are sharp enough to distinguish one monkey from another at this distance. How is it, Billy Bob?"

The sailor blinked, looked at the girl and found an answer.

"That critter we captured here has an odd white spot on his chest, as if he had met with some accident, back years ago, so I could swear to him if I saw him near by. Further than that, all I can say is that I never yet knew Miss Vashti to be wrong about anything."

"There speaks a diplomat," she said gayly. "Billy remembers his friends, too."

The Spry Shark was receding. They stood and watched her while she moved her eccentric way. Presently she was far enough distant so the little figure in her bows became a blur, and even her hull began to blend with the leaping seas. Only the mast was to be seen clearly.

"It's good-by, this time," said the captain soberly. "I wish it were different, but it will soon be all one. Friends, I've loved that jewel of a sloop well in other days."

Gideon said nothing. Being the only person there who expected to see the twenty-fifth of October pass without disaster to the old world, he wished the Spry Shark was where she belonged. Every face was toward her when a voice sounded at their backs.

"Shipmates, can you tell me anything about——"

The voice died away. They turned and saw the stranger they had left unconscious in the tent.

CHAPTER XI.

A WOMAN'S SCREAM.

THERE was brief silence. The coming of the stranger was unexpected, and something in his manner prevented ready reply to his broken question. He looked bewildered, and was pulling restlessly at his beard. Captain Foskett soon rallied, moved forward and took the man's hand.

"Well, shipmate," he said cheerily, "how do you find yourself?"

"Better than ever before," was the reply, but there was no heartiness in it.

"You have had a hard experience, I reckon."

"Have I?"

"With the negroes, you know."

The stranger shook his head slowly, doubtfully.

"Why did I come here with you?" he asked.

Foskett glanced at Gideon. It was now clear that they had a clouded mind before them, and the skipper felt a little at a loss.

"Well, we will talk about that later," he answered. "By the way, I forget what your name is."

The castaway studied the speaker's face, but his eyes nevertheless had a blank expression, and he paused before saying anything. His gaze shifted to the ground, he hesitated, and finally looked up.

"My name?" he muttered. "Do you know, it has got away from me. But why do you ask? You tell it to me. Yes, who am I, and where do I live?"

Now he was pathetic, and he had a sympathiser in every person present. Once more Foskett glanced at the doctor, who nodded as if to recommend further questions. There was work for one experienced in medicine, but if something could be drawn from the unknown, at this time, it would be a start in getting light upon his case.

The captain interrogated, using what skill he could command, but the result only served to confirm the evident situation. The man did not know who he was, nor have the slightest recollection of his past

Gideon took up the line of talk. He showed the stranger the fast-vanishing sloop, he called attention to the gale, to the boat on the shore, to the compass that was still retained, and in various other ways tried to stir the wandering faculties by resort to nautical affairs.

He failed. In a way he seemed to be understood, but the light of reason did not show, and the mental darkness was unbroken. Taking him to the tent, the doctor made a more careful examination, thinking that a blow on the head might have produced concussion, or some kindred trouble, but without results.

An hour later he rejoined Foskett.

"I can only surmise that he has had a severe mental shock," the young man reported. "If that is it, reason will probably finally return, if he has proper care, I'll see that he has that care."

The captain shook his head and said nothing. With the twenty-fifth of October so near, and the world tottering to its fall, it was not likely that care or anything else that man could do would bring the unknown back to conscious life.

By that time the sloop had fully disappeared in the distance, and other things occupied their attention. The gale held, and a fine rain was falling, but Foskett had become more cheerful.

"This won't last long," he said. "We are in for a few wild hours, but it will

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be a short boat soon painted, and not much trouble, anyhow. All we have to do is to keep under cover and let the elements have their brief frolic."

He proved to be a good prophet. All day the wind held and the rain fell, sometimes heavily, but by dark there was a very preceptible lull, with promise of fair weather beyond. The barometer was mounting, and Foskett sided with it.

Of the tents brought along, one was large enough to house all hands, for the captain had looked forward to possible rains, and there, on this evening, the company gathered to listen to the usual reading. The castaway had passed much of the day in bed, but was now with them, and he was an attentive member.

When Foskett finished, the unknown suddenly stood up. Animation had appeared on his blank face, and he showed more intelligence than before. He waved his hand rather gracefully.

"My lads," he said, "you will do well to give strict heed to what our good friend has stated. I, too, have heard of this coming calamity, and can assure you that learned men say the world will come to an end on October twenty-fifth. Keep that fact always before you. I wish I had the gift of speech necessary to impress this upon you more fully, but, really it is not needed, when your reverend pastor has so well explained. Respect his holy office, and understand that he knows. I could not, at first, believe that the world was coming to an end, but a friend put it this way to me: 'Captain Blair,' said he, 'there is ample proof of all that is claimed. If you will look in ——' "

The fluent speech halted, the speaker became bewildered, then dull, and after a look of pained uncertainty, he turned to Foskett.

"Reverend sir," he added, "pray finish for me."

The case was too pathetic for amusement over the fact that Foskett had been mistaken for a minister, and the latter allowed no awkward pause. Diplomatically, he talked for a little while to cover the man's embarrassment, and then addressed him directly.

"How long have you followed the sea, Captain Blair?"

The derelict brushed his hand across his forehead slowly.

"Am I a seafaring man?" he asked soberly.

"Why, don't you remember, you were captain of the ——I forget the name of your vessel."

"So do I, if I ever had one."

The flash of reason had faded, but it was a good deal that it had occurred. It spoke well for Blair's future. Other flashes might be looked for, and finally complete recovery. That they finally had his name was not doubted.

Ten minutes later, as Gideon was about to leave the tent, he noticed Billy Rob figuring at his account book. It was nothing new, for the sailor was always at it in his leisure hours, but now the doctor paused by his side.

"How does your record add up, Billy?" he asked.

"Bad, sir, bad!" and Billy sighed deeply. "It is discouraging to keep a credit and debit account when the items are nigh about all on the one side. Look, doctor! That page is what's to my credit of good deeds. Only one item I could think of to put down. The page facing it is my debit. Page all full, you see. Then the next two pages, just the same, and always the same as far as I have balanced the books to date. Good doctor, what a poor chance I've got when I can show but one good deed to offset a lot of bad ones."

"Billy," replied Gideon, smiling, "don't worry about your bad deeds. You never did anything worse than to kill fleas and mosquitoes, and you can guess how dark a deed that is. What you require most is help at your books, and when I've the time I will look into your accounts. Prepare to see the credit pages filled fat with your good acts."

"Doctor, you may be able to cure a sick man, but not to heal a record as sick as mine," and the sailor shook his head dismally.

"He ought to forget that book, sir," said Jim Black. "We fellers have all repented, and our sins are gone away like ugly smears. Billy, mate, cheer up. I have!"

The doctor laughed and went out. Making his way to his tent he was busy for a short time, and was about to go to Captain Blair when a woman's scream echoed through the camp.

Startled, he stood for a moment without ability to move. Why should anybody scream in the camp? A peaceable, harmonious party was there, and no one was inclined even to jest unfeelingly with his associates. It was surprising. He dashed out of the cover, and ran toward where the tents of the women stood in a group. Beside that occupied by the Foskett sisters he saw a gathered group, and he joined them and pushed his way inside.

He saw Vashti and Sybil, apparently unharmed, but there was some excitement in the faces revealed by the lamp.

"Which way did he run?" Foskett was asking.

"I only know that he went," Vashti replied.

"Well, we must learn more about it. This is a serious matter!" exclaimed the captain, fumbling as if for a pistol.

CHAPTER XII.

OTHER MEN COME.

GIDEON'S worst fears were quieted, but there was reason for some apprehension, and he sought for an explanation.

"What has happened?" he asked quickly.

"Somebody was in the tent when Sybil and I came back here," Vashti answered. "All was dark, but when I tried to enter he rushed at the entrance, collided with me and almost overturned me, and then ran away fleetly."

"Somebody else is on the island," said Captain Foskett.

"What was the man like?" the doctor pursued.

"I cannot tell a thing as to that. He may have been black or white, or any other color. He was just a dark shape in the great blackness of the night."

"We must infer that it was a black man, a regular West Indiaman," added the skipper. "This wind may have led a party of that kind to land before it became too rough to handle a boat. It seems that they were over on the south end of the island, and he came here, just now, to see what he could find. That's how I theorize."

"Anything missing?" Gideon asked.

The sisters looked, and failed to find two or three minor articles.

"Give me the lamp, please," the doctor pursued. "Although that monkey has been officially condemned to exile as the previous thief, I have not been wholly convinced that he was so. Now he is gone, and the late robber may be the same before troubling us. The grass has been worn away a little in the tents, and if we could find a footprint——"

"The bare feet of black men leave a track too small for us to see," the skipper reminded. "That is, on rather hard earth like this."

Gideon was already stooping, lamp in hand, and he now motioned.

"How about that?" he asked.

"The print of a boot. But it may have been made hours before."

"Take notice that the tracks are like those of a person going in haste, and that they lead to the exit. Your daughters constantly tread here. His tracks are over theirs. Ladies, what man was in here last?—your father?"

"Yes, but he has not been here for two days," Sybil replied. "No other man has been here."

"That track was made this evening. Look!—the imprint is wet, as if made by the boot of one just in from the rain. Now, captain, was the monkey guilty or innocent?"

"You mean, of course, that the original thief is still here. You may be right. Our searchers always said that there were so many nooks over south, and nooks often deep at that, that they could not be sure but a man was there. Possibly we ought to give the monkey a clean bill of health and certify that a booted man has stolen all our things, but—I don't know."

"The thief of tonight may be an entirely different person. Just to satisfy a mere shred of possibility, I'm going to see if Captain Blair has been fast in his tent. Billy Rob is with him."

The speaker went out, dismissing those who had heard the scream, by making a casual explanation. When he returned his report cleared Blair. That man had not been out of Billy's sight.

"There is a slight annoyance in this," remarked Foskett calmly, "but I don't think it will pay us to make further search to the south. Better safeguard our property by some device like running a cord around the camp, with our small bell attached. An intruder will stumble over the one, which will ring the other, and so sound an alarm. Also, we will be more careful of our few belongings."

They separated, and once more the camp became a place of sleep, though not one of quiet. Wind lashed the trees, and rain beat in all parts, but the trouble never approached the wrath of a really furious gale. The campers awakened in the morning to find the rain gone and the sun shining dully. The outburst of nature was gone, and only the drenched earth and the rioting sea told of what had gone before.

"Now," said Jim Black optimistically, "we shall have a peaceful day of it."

An hour afterwards he was not so sure of his position as a prophet. Captain Foskett was standing over Billy Rob, who was doing some ropework by his order, and Gideon was by their side, when Peter Hill came with long steps.

"Say," he cried, "there are heathen on this island!"

"What's that?" Foskett returned.

"There are half a dozen men over on the nearest point of the high land, and they are black fellows, armed with spears and other things. Of course it is a long ways off, but they look ugly to me."

"Show me where."

The captain spoke with uneasiness. There were negroes in the West Indies who were thoroughly peaceful and well-meaning, but his many encounters with pirates, there, had sharpened his wits and barred oversanguine deductions from his mind. He did not want any buccaneers on Racimo.

Everything was found as Peter had said. The north end of the visible rocky ground was an uplift of stone twenty feet high, and there the strangers stood. Six erect, impressive figures they were, scantily clad, with black skins showing plainly, and each man carried a spear. That other weapons were there was probable, but could not be stated at the distance that intervened.

"I don't like them," Foskett admitted gravely.

"They have the means of fighting, if they want to do it."

"Typical pirates to look at, though we need not judge hastily. Our tents are pitched so they cannot be seen from the sea, but they are visible from yonder little cliff. They know we are there. What next?"

"If they were peaceable men would they not come to us?" Gideon asked.

"Yes, for the law-abiding negro hereabouts learns that he can trust white men, and our tents would be a great curiosity to draw them. They have the curiosity of children, in fact. The most natural guess is that these are lawless fellows who do not count enough to make attack on us safe, but if they have a boat they can go for re-enforcements as soon as the sea subsides."

"Do you infer that, being out in a small craft, they landed just before the gale, for safety?"

"Yes."

"Let me go over that way secretly, and see what they are. I can use the thick bushes of the east shore and avoid discovery."

"Are you skillful enough to do that?"

"Try me."

"Better yet, we will go together. Dalton is a wise man, and fit to keep the camp. I'll see him, and then we will go."

Ten minutes later they started. The spearmen were still to be seen, but not so statuesquely as before. They were moving, as if they had seen enough for then, and one or two had fallen back somewhat. The scouts set off briskly, though making sure they did not reveal themselves to the intruders. Ten minutes later, as they entered a glade, Foskett suddenly paused and looked upward.

"I don't fully like the looks of that sky," he remarked.

"It has a brassy color," Gideon replied. "Do you expect another gale?"

The captain was slow with his answer.

"Fact is," he finally said, "I have seen just that appearance in the heavens before earthquakes. Something of that sort is to be expected, of course, just before the final crash of the world, and that is why I speak of it so freely. Still, that look up aloft may mean nothing serious."

Continuing their way they finally reached the south end of the island, and presently had certain facts. A sailboat lay on the farther reach of land, and eight men were ashore. It was not advisable to go very near them, but even at a distance they were revealed as fierce, brutal-looking fellows, well armed and swaggering of manner.

Of that caliber were the pirates of the West Indies.

Leaving the black men jabbering together they made their way back to camp. No immediate attack was to be feared, and if the campers kept together they would be safe as long as the enemy had so few numbers. Right there was the trouble. The wind had wholly lulled, and it would not require a great length of time for the seas to dwindle so that hardy boatmen could launch their craft and go away.

Would it, in this case, be to bring re-enforcements that would overwhelm the Foskett party?

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Sincerely yours,
C. E. USSERY,
Bowersville, Ga.

Personally appeared before me, this 8th of September, 1909, C. E. Ussery, who subscribed the above statement and made oath that the same is true in substance and in fact.

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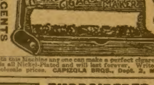

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"I do not think," said the captain, replying to a question, "that it will happen so. We are believers, and though we cannot read the will of Providence at all times, it is hardly likely that we are to end our lives at the hands of heathen criminals. This is October twenty-third, and we shall soon be where the evil ones of this world will do us no harm. We will, however, neglect no precautions."

He gave attention to these precautions. The camp was not suitable for strong defense, having no natural barriers, and earthworks were not to be thought of, so preparations were limited to placing the weapons so they could readily be seized, and in keeping pickets thrown out a short distance

The day passed without trouble, and all the while the water subsided. By twilight it was safe for boats, and it was no surprise when a reconnoissance showed that the black men were gone. Would they return with more desperadoes with them?

The next morning brought but one change in the conditions around them. The brassy look in the sky had increased, but it was now marked with red and other stripes of all hues. An ugly sky it was, and as the wind suddenly fell to nothing and the heat grew painful, with sulphurous odors that tanged at the nostrils unpleasantly, there was uneasiness on Racimo.

The end of the world was set for the next day, but these things were too much like what they had seen before, and detested, to please the old seamen.

Night was again drawing near when Ira Dalton, who had been on a scout, returned hurriedly and reported to Foskett.

"Sir," he said, "there is an armed drogher approaching the south shore, and she is filled with black men. She looks like a pirate!"

This story will be concluded in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

Her He Cousin.

"Sometimes," remarked a charming young woman who had qualified as an efficient nurse, "I really wish I weren't so thoroughly cousined.

"What do I mean? Why, I mean, my dear, that I have too many cousins. I have just two here in town and they're two too many. They're all the relatives I have this side of Canada, yet I'm actually ungrateful enough to wish they weren't cousins.

"When I first came over here for my hospital training I was so lonely and homesick that I allowed my Cousin Jane, Mrs. Thornton, to do a great deal too much for me. She is the kindest soul imaginable, but she got in the habit of managing me so much that it has only been by great force of will that I have escaped living at her house. She thinks it is dreadful for me to board at our nice home for nurses when I'm not on a case, and I think it would be dreadful for me to stay at her house, as I'm liable to be called up at any time of night and disturb the whole family.

"The other cousin? I'm coming to him now.

"Yes, it's a he—a really delightful bachelor, and no relation at all to Cousin Jane. On the other side of the house, you see, and, ridiculous as it is, they're actually jealous of each other about me Cousin Jane says that, as he is only mother's second cousin once removed, I shouldn't consider him a relative at all. She doesn't appear to realize when a girl is in training at a strict hospital there are great advantages in having a man cousin in town. And as for Cousin Billy, he can't understand why I let Mrs. Thornton 'boss' me the way he thinks she does.

"I had an engagement to go to the theater with him last night, and yesterday morning Cousin Jane telephoned to know if I wouldn't go to her house for dinner and stay all night. She said that her husband was away and we could have a lovely quiet evening. I told her I couldn't because there was something I had to do.

"'Oh, your home letters?' she said while I was trying to think up some harmless fiction. 'I know you have to do them while you're off duty, but you can write them just as well at my house, Helen.'

"'No, Cousin Jane, I have to be absolutely alone when I write,' I said, quickly grasping at the straw she had unconsciously thrown out to me.

"'Well, then if you won't come to stay with me, I'll run over and have a little visit with you before you settle down to your letter writing.'

"I inwardly groaned, and almost wished I had told her the truth, though I knew she would have protested that late hours were bad for me.

"I didn't know what to do, but having got myself into the little tangle, I decided to go deeper, for I knew that if Cousin Jane discovered that I had kept my real plans from her she would be hurt, so after dinner I told our young hall boy that if my cousin called to say that I was out. I thought I could explain this morning that I had to have some fresh air and exercise before writing my letters.

"'All right, Miss Bingham; sure, I get you,' he said with his comprehending grin. He's a pink-cheeked little chap and I'm afraid the nurses have spoiled him.

"I then went upstairs to put on my best. Cousin Billy insists that he adores my blue and white stripes, but, just the same, I notice that he always has something complimentary to say when he sees me in something else than my uniform. At half-past seven I began to expect him. At seven-forty-five I began to be nervous about being late to the theater. At eight I began to be angry At eight-fifteen I pulled off my white kid gloves and declared to myself that nothing would induce me to go if he did come, but I continued to wait anxiously for the rap on my door. It wasn't till after nine that I really gave him up I didn't know what to think. If he hadn't been knocked unconscious by an automobile there was no excuse for him, and, of course, even vexed as I was, I couldn't bear to think that Cousin Billy was injured, so I just grew angrier and angrier.

"At ten o'clock I was called downstairs to the telephone. I thought it would certainly be Billy on the wire. I was awfully disappointed when I found it was only Cousin Jane saying she hadn't been able to come over after all, and hoping I wouldn't strain by eyes by writing too late.

"As I started back upstairs the hall boy called to me. 'Your cousin came, and I said you were out, all right.'

"'Why, she just telephoned me that she couldn't come.'

"'Oh,' the boy laughed, 'it was your he cousin who come. I guess he didn't believe me. He said he seen a light in your window, and he said he knowed you were home. That made me mad and I said maybe he thought he knew more than you and me together. I told him it was your orders I should tell him you wasn't home. I guess that fixed him.'

"I knew it was all my own fault, so I just went to the telephone and called up Cousin Billy. If he hadn't been home, if he had been at the theater without me, I never should have forgiven him. But he was at home and he felt as bad as I did, though he didn't cry. When he heard me sob as I explained the silly misunderstanding he said, 'Why, bless your heart, little girl, we'll go to the theater tomorrow night and every night while you're off duty, and if you'll only say so, we'll put a stop to this old duty-before-pleasure and we'll'—but, of course, he was just talking nonsense."

* * *

Disconcerting.

Supper was in progress, and the father was telling about a row which took place in front of his store that morning: "The first thing I saw was one man deal the other a sounding blow, and then a crowd gathered. The man who was struck ran and grabbed a large shovel he had been using on the street, and rushed back, his eyes blazing fiercely. I thought he'd surely knock the other man's brains out, and I stepped right in between them."

The young son of the family had become so hugely interested in the narrative as it proceeded that he had stopped eating his pudding. So proud was he of his father's valor his eyes fairly shone, and he cried:

"He couldn't knock any brains out of you, could he, father?"

Father looked at him long and earnestly, but the lad's countenance was frank and open.

Father gasped slightly and resumed his supper

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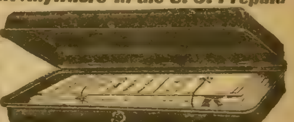

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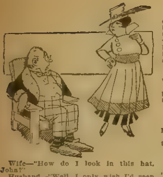


Wife—"How do I look in this hat, John?"

Husband—"Well, I only wish I'd seen you in that hat before I asked you to marry me!"

The Climate Did Not Agree.

In a certain town the local forecaster of the weather was so often wrong that his predictions became a standing joke, to his no small annoyance, for he was very sensitive. At length, in despair of living down his reputation, he asked headquarters to transfer him to another station.

A brief correspondence ensued

"Why," asked headquarters, "do you wish to be transferred?"

"Because," the forecaster promptly replied, "the climate doesn't agree with me."

◆

Had a Familiar Look.

Mrs. Flashly—"How does my new hat look, Tom?"

Thomas—"I'm! It looks to me like two weeks salary."

◆

A Pennsylvania Wedding.

First Neighbor (in the coal regions)—"How did zee weddingski come offski?"

Second Neighbor—"Very stylishski! Twenty-three heads brokeski."

An Ideal Country Editor.

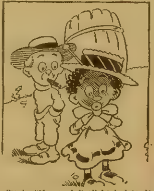
First Wayback Citizen—"Heard the news?"

Second Wayback Citizen—"Eh? More burglaries?"

"Mighty near it. As th' new editor of th' Wayback Whoop was goin' home last night, he saw two burglars in Ike Weightlight's store. Well, sir, that editor jus' pitched in, shot one of 'em, an' caught the other."

"That so? Well, I'm glad we've got an editor at last what makes himself useful to the public, instead of sittin around doing nothin' but writin'."

◆



Sarah—"My pap left all he had to de county."

Tommy—"What did he have?"

Sarah—"Eight children."

◆

Too Far Ahead.

A certain New York clubman, who passes a bit of his time in Canada, hunts with a camera as well as a gun. During his last expedition in that quarter he was accompanied by a friend, who, going off by himself, stumbled full upon a big black bear. As he was the only thing in sight, he became the immediate object of bruin's attentions. He had only a slight lead, but was going pretty well when the first mentioned hunter poked through the brush with his camera and took in the situation

"Hold on there, old chap!" he yelled. "You're too far ahead. I can't get you both in."

◆

Her Charms Undimmed.

Friend—"And you don't know where your husband spends his evenings?"

M[illegible] the r mot-st [illegible]

"[illegible] particle."

"On what do you base your confidence?"

"On the fact that whenever I enter a crowded street car a dozen men jump up and offer me a seat."

■

Large in Comparison.

"Darling," whispered the ardent suitor, "I lay my fortune at your feet."

"Your fortune?" she replied in surprise. "I didn't know you had one."

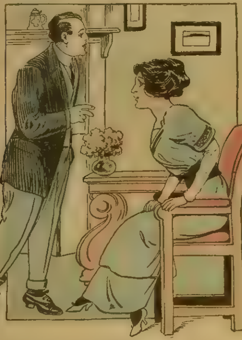
"Well, it isn't much of a fortune, but it will look large beside those tiny feet."

■

Forced to It.

[illegible]—Still keeping bachelor's hall?"

Jinks—"No. Fact is, times got so hard that I could no longer afford to smash up the dirty dishes and buy new ones. So I got married."



Hubby—"I have given up drinking and smoking because you asked me to. I have also given up poker. Now, what do you want me to give up?"

"Wifey—"Sixty dollars. I need an Easter hat."

Better Than Herbs.

Anxious Mother—"There is a certain very eligible young man that I want my daughter to fall in love with. Do you deal in love philters?"

Modern Magician—"No, madam; but I can bring the match about in another way."

"Oh, thank you. What shall I do?"

"Shut her up in a boarding school for a year, and then arrange your plans so that this youth shall be the first man she meets after she gets out."

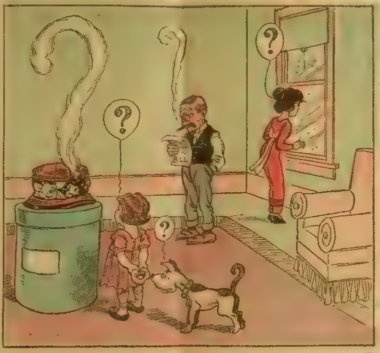
Sure of Adoption.

Inventor—"Now I've struck it! I have invented a new life-saving contrivance for trolley cars. Look at the drawings."

Friend—"Too complicated [illegible] expensive. No road will buy it."

Inventor—"They won't, eh? Just wait. They will actually tumble over each other in their haste to adopt it. My machine raises the victim from the tracks and pitches him over the dashboard into the car, where the conductor can collect his fare."

THE EASTER QUESTION



EASTER SONG.

Just a song in season!—
Bonnets, belles and beaux,
Fling a flout at reason,
And a jibe at prose!
Life runs now in meter;
Ribbons are the things,
These—and much that's sweeter—
Easter brings!

Violets and candy,
Foibles, frolics, fairs;
And the Ars Amandi
In the place of prayers
We have paid the piper
Now for—other things
Buds—and much that's riper—
Easter brings!

We have had confession,
Somber, sober, staid;
Now for the procession,
Now for the parade!
After stew and stammer
Over sins—and things,
Oh, the glow and glamour
Easter brings!

—C. S. in Life

◆

What Would Follow.

The speaker was waxing eloquent, and after his peroration on woman's rights he said:

"When they take our girls, as they threaten, away from the coeducational colleges, what will follow? What will follow? I repeat."

And a loud masculine voice in the audience replied: "I will!"

Hit for Hat.

Mrs. Toggerblossom—"Vain man! Did you never observe that designers take a woman's head to adorn many of your coins?"

Mr. Toggerblossom—"No, but I have observed that designers take many of my coins to adorn a woman's head."

◆

Glad of It.

Chollie—"Say, old fellow, I'm in beastly bad luck; need money badly, and haven't the least idea where to get it."

Chauncey—"Well, do tell! Do you know I'm really glad to hear it; I thought perhaps you might have an idea you could touch me for it."

Couldn't Bear to Look at It.

The ready applicant for a "job" had unexpectedly obtained what he asked and was set to wheel top dressing for gardening operations. Halfway through the morning his temporary employer had occasion to criticise his method of going to work.

"Why don't you push th wheelbarrow instead of dragging it after you?" he was asked. "It would save you trouble."

"Not me," growled Weary Willie disgustedly. "I'm sick of the sight o' the blamed thing."

◆

A Weak Chest.

At the yards they tell of a man who was visiting an acquaintance, one of the foremen, who asked him

"Did you hear about poor Flannery?"

"Niver a word; phwat about Flannery?"

"Shure, the big steam hammer in the foundhry dropped on his chist and killed him."

"Well," said the man [illegible] "O'im not surprised, for Flannery always did have a weak chist."

◆

An Artist in His Line.

Applicant—"You are advertising for a retoucher, I see."

Photographer—"Are you good at retouching?"

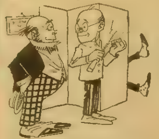
Applicant—"Good at it! Why, sir, I can retouch a woman's picture so artistically that her own husband will fall in love with her."

His Quandary.

When L. Q. C. Lamar, member of Cleveland's Cabinet, went to Washington, he wanted to find a suitable home [illegible] offers was one [illegible] who was anxious [illegible] beautiful residence for a [illegible] After expatiating on its [illegible] advantages the lady quoted [illegible] rental at $7,500, and [illegible] 'What do you think of it Mr [illegible]

[illegible] said he gravely, stroking his [illegible] I am only wondering how I can [illegible] to spend the other $500 of my [illegible]"

◆



Customer (after having five teeth filled)—"Oi'll pay for these fillings nixt week, if Oi kin; and if Oi can't Oi'll come around and let you take thim out again."

◆

No Great Secret.

In a small South American State which had recently undergone a change of administration the new potentate summoned an artist and ordered new designs for all the official uniforms.

"I wish showy [illegible] he said, "for people are [illegible] I have here some sketches that I myself have made. Look them over [illegible]

The artist examined the sketches [illegible] "This," [illegible] evidently for the navy [illegible] with this—long plume on a three cornered hat, yellow dress coat trimmed with purple, and——."

"That," replied the Chief of State, [illegible] "is the secret police."

◆

A Good Word.

An old Scotch woman was famous for speaking kindly. No sheep was so dark but she could discover some white spot to point out to those who could see only blackness. One day a gossiping neighbor lost patience with her and said angrily:

"Woman, ye'll hae a guid word to say for the deevil himself!"

Instantly came the reply:

"Weel, he's a vera industreeous body."

◆

His Ode.

"Oh, George," she exclaimed, "now that you've seen my new hat you simply can't regret that I got it. Isn't it just a poem?"

"Well, if it is," replied George, "I suppose a proper title for it would be 'Owed to a Milliner.'"

◆

The Party Platform.

"Wasn't there something about a promise to love, honor and obey me in that marriage ceremony?" asked Mr. Meeker.

"Goodness, Leonidas! You are like some of those politicians who never quit talking about a party platform."

Not a Good Speller.

Miss Hitch was having some trouble with a little fellow in her spelling class

"B-e-d spells bed," she explained, over and over again; "b-e-d, bed. Do you understand?"

"Yes'm."

"Well [illegible] d-o-g spells dog, and [illegible] What did I tell you [illegible]"

"Dunno."

"Don't know! You don't know what b-e-d spells after all I've told you?"

"No'm."

"Well once more, b-e-d spells what you sleep in. Now what do you sleep in?"

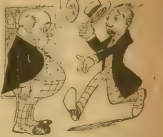
"My pajamas!" triumphantly exclaimed the youngster.

◆

Wouldn't Hurt It.

"That old barn of yours is decidedly picturesque," said the artist. "May I paint it?"

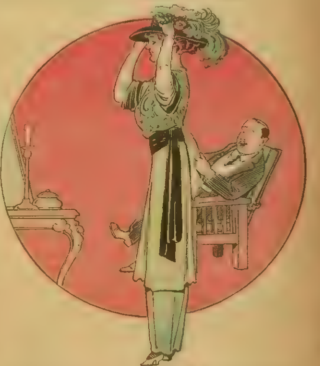
"Wa-all a leetle paint wouldn't do it no harm," replied Farmer Clovertop. "What do you charge?"



Walla—"Quick, Doc, my wife's fainted."

Doctor—"What's the trouble?"

Wall[illegible] she showed me her new hat and the bill at the same time and I didn't say a word."



Wifey—"How do you like my Easter hat? [illegible] just gotten its finishing touch."

Hubby—"No, friend wife, I will get that [illegible]"

Called Away.

A young surgeon received late one evening a note from three of his fellow practitioners:

"Please come over to the club and join us at a game of bridge."

"Millie, dear," he said to his wife, "here I am called away again. It is an important case—there are three other doctors on the spot already."

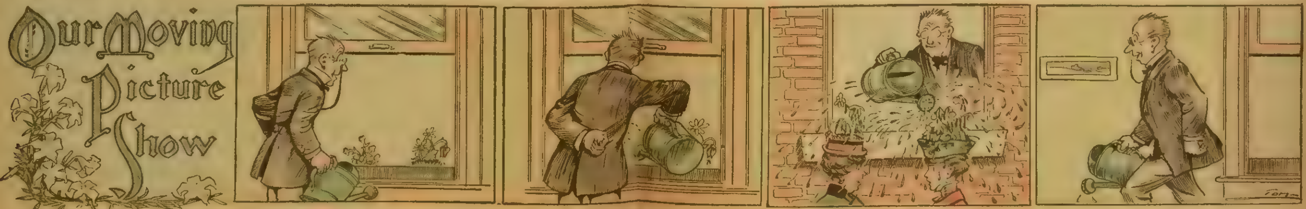
The Cautious Farmer.

A Pennsylvania farmer was the owner of [illegible] Alderney [illegible] A stranger, [illegible] animal, asked the [illegible] take for your [illegible]

[illegible] er scratched his head for a [illegible] d then said

[illegible] re? Be you the tax assessor [illegible] been killed by the railroad?"

THOSE EASTER HATS



Professor Chug—"By George! Looks as if my efforts were doing some good. I didn't think these flowers would be up so fine on Easter Sunday."

"Well, a little more water will do them no harm."

[illegible] Gallap. I do believe it's raining!"

[illegible] Tret 'A regular cloudburst!' It's ruining our Easter hats."

Professor Chug—"There, that's done. I must go and tell Mary that the flowers are up. She will certainly be pleased."

The Mountain of Gold

Or, Beside the White Pool

By George Ethelbert Walsh

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CHAPTER XIII.

HUGO sought his father and Bergmasson, and related in a highly excited voice all that had occurred, ending his narrative with the warning that they must do something at once to escape the terrible fate awaiting them. But to his surprise they were more interested in Ah-se-watti's confession of her identity than the danger threatening them personally.

"So Ah-se-watti is Mary's child!" Bergmasson mused, pacing back and forth in the small hut. "And Mary's dead and Professor Verril, too!"

Professor Zenda raised a trembling hand, and said weakly: "We may be thankful for that. It's better that they should perish than live in this hole."

"But their child lives here," replied Bergmasson, turning savagely upon him, "and a worse fate is overtaking her. We must do something to save her. She can't marry that dwarf, and—and——"

He choked and swallowed his words with a gulp.

"Yes, yes, we owe it to them—to Mary and Professor Verril," chimed in the old ethnologist.

Hugo glanced from one to the other with wild, imploring eyes. It was easy to promise to do something, but they were up against a blank wall, and no one realized it better than he.

"What—what can we do?" he grumbled thickly. "We can't get out of this infernal hole ourselves. And how are we going to save Ah-se-watti?"

Bergmasson did not answer; he renewed his pacing in agitated impatience. In all his experiences in the jungles and mountains of Borneo and New Guinea, he had never faced a problem that so outwitted him. There had always been some way out of his predicaments, desperate as they had often appeared, but he was now up against a proposition that apparently had no solution.

Hugo, after a long silence, sighed and spoke with resignation. "There's only one thing to do," he said slowly. "You and father must take your chance tomorrow in the White Pool. I can't see you beheaded. That's a fate worse than I can imagine. If you escape alive, and can return by the Death River, I'll be waiting for you here."

"But Ah-se-watti?"

"Leave her to me. I'll stay here to protect her. If I can save her, I'll —"

He gulped and stammered with emotion.

"Why not go with us, Hugo?" Bergmasson asked kindly, laying a hand on his arm.

"No, I couldn't go and leave Ah-se-watti behind. She asked me to stay. My presence here will give her courage. She —she——"

Bergmasson nodded and withdrew his hand.

"All right, Hugo. Perhaps you're right. But I still think, if we could rescue Ah-se-watti, it would be better for all of us to die fighting. It would be an easier death."

"Yes," gloomily assented Hugo, "but we can't find her. She's gone, and I'm unable to discover the entrance through which she disappeared."

"In the morning we'll search for it— [illegible] of us. Meanwhile, let us get a good night's rest and be refreshed for a hard day's work."

They retired early to their beds of sweet-smelling ferns, and tried to forget the troubles facing them on the morrow; but sleep came unwillingly, and by daybreak they were up and ready to put their plan into effect.

They searched the jungle in vain for the entrance to the cave; it was so artfully concealed by the dense mat of creepers and tropical growths that they were unsuccessful. By noon they gave it up. Hugo waited impatiently for some hopeful sign, confident until the last that Ah-se-watti would relent and return.

But as the sun crossed the noon meridian and she did not reappear he began to lose hope. Bergmasson and Professor Zenda returned to the hut, and half an hour later Hugo found them there in deep consultation.

"Hugo, we have decided to take the chance," Bergmasson said, greeting him. "Any minute the dwarfs may come for us, and then it will be too late. There's one chance in a million we may go through the White Pool and come out alive. There's no escaping death if we linger here. We might fight the dwarfs off for a time, but they would soon overcome us. They would kill you, too, if we resisted them. And then, Ah-se-watti

"It's for the best, my boy," broke in Professor Zenda, shaking with emotion. "It will give you a fighting chance, and if we ever return we can save both you and Ah-se-watti."

"Yes, it's the only thing to do," replied Hugo dully.

"Then we're ready," Bergmasson announced. "We'll go to the White Pool and wait there for our captors. When they come, we'll take the fatal plunge."

Without further words they picked up their few keepsakes, and filed out of the hut which had sheltered them for over a week. They walked down the slope of the valley until they reached the brink of the pool. Bergmasson handed his weapons to Hugo.

"You may need them," he said with a sad smile. "We will not. But don't use them unless necessary. I wouldn't excite the wrath of the dwarfs until cornered. Be patient and wait. It may come out all right in the end!"

But while he spoke encouragingly, he had no faith in his words. The White Pool was boiling and seething at their feet, a veritable maelstrom of surging waters. What chance had any one in that vortex of swirling death?

The lake narrowed at this end, and its waters rushed swiftly between the high embankments until they reached a rocky wall. They boiled and foamed against this, and then, forced backward, they formed a swift counter current, swirling around in a spiral and disappearing through an underground outlet. The middle of the pool was a foot or two lower than the sides. The waters were literally sucked down into the earth.

Whipped into foam and spray, a dense, foggy mist spread over the whole surface of the pool. At times this mist was so thick that the middle of the pool was hidden from view; but though unable at such moments to see the swirling vortex, the roar and hiss of the maelstrom rent the air in a continuous rumble. There was no disguising its danger, even when hidden by a veil of mist.

Sitting on the rocks overlooking the White Pool, the three adventurers gazed at it with varying emotions. It held a fascination for them in spite of the terror it inspired. Professor Zenda shuddered and muttered an inarticulate prayer.

"It will soon be over," Bergmasson said, reassuringly, smiling at his companion in misery. "And it's preferable to the other fate"

"Yes, a thousand times!" assented the old scientist.

Hugo wound an arm affectionately about his father, but words failed to escape his lips. What could he say to encourage him? One might as well try to console the dying

Suddenly a distant rumble, made by the pattering of many feet in the cave corridors, startled them. For a moment they remained silent, listening.

"They're coming for us," Bergmasson remarked, rising and divesting himself of his shoes and all unnecessary clothing. "Shall we make the plunge together, Professor? We can go down to death holding each other's hand. If one is saved, then he can help the other."

"Yes, I'm ready."

Professor Zenda, with Hugo's help, divested himself of all useless apparel It was a forlorn hope, but if there was a chance of saving themselves by swimming, they would go prepared.

"Here they come!" exclaimed Hugo, pointing toward the main entrance to the caves, where scores of black, fuzzy heads appeared. "But," he added grimly, "we'll cheat them of their prey. "Good-by, father! Good-by!"

The old scientist fell on his neck and wept. "Good-by, my boy! Good-by, and may God help you!"

Bergmasson gripped his hand and looked squarely in his eyes. "Don't give up hope, Hugo! We're going on an adventurous journey from which we may never return. But if we can do it—we'll come back. Have patience for a time—a few days or weeks!"

"If it wasn't for Ah-se-watti I'd go with you," murmured Hugo. "I'm not sure but I ought to——"

"No, no! She'll need you—poor girl! I wish to God she was with us! I'd rather think of her lying dead in that pool than living with the dwarfs."

"If you don't return soon," cried Hugo, "I'll follow you—with Ah-se-watti, if I can find he

A wild, uncanny chant was set up by the horde of approaching dwarfs. It was the chant that accompanied their sacrificial rites in the cave. They shuddered as it rose on the air and vibrated back and forth in the crater.

So weird and uncanny did it sound that the three adventurers took heart and looked with eyes of relief at the swirling pool. Death down there in the waters would not be so terrible as the scene that would inevitably follow.

The head of the procession of dwarfs appeared on the rocks back of them They were coming slowly and steadily, confident that their victims could not escape.

Bergmasson gripped a hand of the old scientist. They stood a moment in silence, uttering a silent prayer; then, with the dwarfs fifty feet away, they ran to the edge of the rock and plunged out into space.

With a little suppressed cry, Hugo ran to the edge as if he, too, would plunge into the fatal White Pool; but he stopped at the brink and gazed with horrified eyes at his two companions. They went down and disappeared from view, but the mighty current tossed them to the surface, and then rushed them swiftly around toward the middle of the pool.

They glanced up at Hugo on the rocks; then some power mightier than theirs caught them and swept them beneath the waters. They disappeared as a cork sucked into the flume of a mill.

Hugo continued kneeling on the rocks, hoping to see their heads reappear, but nothing except the sucking, foaming water met his gaze. They had gone, past all hope of recovery. But whether to their instant death or to some miraculous escape, he could not say.

When he turned his head he was conscious of others. on the brink of the pool. A dozen dwarfs were gazing down into the waters where their victims had disappeared. Almost as much impressed as Hugo, they continued to gaze at the bottom of the pool in wide-eyed astonishment.

With a smile of derision, Hugo looked up at the little men and laughed harshly and loudly. "Well, you grinning devils, you won't have your victims today! Your old god Manoin can't bring them back! Now do your worst!"

An insane desire to rush at the dwarfs, push them into the pool, and end it all in one wild scramble, seized him; but the thought of Ah-se-watti restrained him. He laughed like a madman and staggered away from the brink.

The dwarfs turned and glared at him, and then set up a babble of wild jabbering and gesticulating. The unexpected had happened, and, angry at being cheated of their victims, they threatened to fall upon Hugo and drag him away. Drawing his weapons, he stood prepared for an attack, determined to fight if they should assault him, and then follow his two companions in the pool. Deprived of their intended victims, he feared they might demand him for a sacrifice in their place.

But the dwarfs lacked, apparently, any leader with authority to decide upon this new issue, and after a few minutes of excited conversation they turned and fled to the entrance of the cave. Like rats scampering into their holes before the approach of an enemy, they ran to the cave entrance, leaving Hugo alone on the rocks.

Fearful lest they might return again, after securing orders from their chiefs to capture him and offer him up as a sacrifice to Manoin despite his age, he remained on the rocks near the White Pool. He was determined to sell his life dearly, and then seek solace in the waters that roared and seethed at his feet.

CHAPTER XIV.

HUGO sat on the brink of the pool, gazing with brooding and fascinated eyes at the maelstrom, conscious only of his sorrow and the terrible loneliness that pervaded the valley. At times he raised his head and listened, but only the rumble of the pool disturbed the eternal silence of the place.

Once he glanced across the pool and through the veil of mist he seemed to see the outline of a form watching him. It was rainbow tinted, with hair of burnished copper and eyes of deep-sea blue.

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He stretched forth his arms and moaned:

"Ah-se-watti! Ah-se-watti!"

The vision did not vanish, but seemed to draw nearer, a wild, imploring expression dawning in the eyes. Hugo cleared his mind of the mist and stared in amazement. Was he dreaming or was the vision a reality? He struggled to his feet, and once more murmured softly:

"Ah-se-watti!"

This time he was sure the vision moved. The arms, bare to the shoulders, were raised and stretched toward him, and the burnished head uplifted so he could see the sun glinting on the forehead.

"My God, am I going mad?" he exclaimed, staggering back from the brink.

He cleared his eyes again, a gentle wind lifting the spray and mist so that the veil was withdrawn.

On the opposite embankment, Ah-se-watti was standing in the clear sunlight, with arms extended and eyes raised imploringly to him. No words escaped her lips, but the attitude conveyed more than words.

Hugo, now that his senses were cleared, lost no time. Fearful lest it might prove a vision after all and disappear before he could reach it, he plunged down the rocks and made his way swiftly to the other side, muttering words of endearment as he stumbled along in violent haste. Once intervening rocks and trees shut out the sight of her, and he groaned in an agony of spirit.

But when he rounded the obstructing bowlders, he saw her again—calm, motionless and speechless. With a little cry of delight he climbed the steep incline, rushed to her side and clasped her in his arms in wild, ecstatic joy.

"Ah-se-watti!" he cried. "Ah-se-watti, my love! My love!"

With passionate fervor he kissed her lips, her cheeks, her brow, her neck, caressing the hair with one hand while the other held her firmly lest she escape him again.

He heard her sigh gently; the head rested on his shoulders and the lips yielded to his. For a moment they were oblivious of all their surroundings. The roar of the White Pool seemed to sing a paean of joy instead of a mournful funeral dirge.

She raised her head finally and looked up with eyes moist from unshed tears, a smile of great joy in them.

"I had to come to you," she murmured softly. "It's against Manoin's laws, but I had to come. He will punish us, but he can't rob me of this moment of joy."

"Manoin can go to——" Hugo smiled down into the eyes and checked his words. It was enough for him that he had her in his arms, and there was no need to shatter her simple, trusting faith.

"We shall never be separated again, dear," he added after a pause. "If it's Manoin's law that we shall die together, I'm ready for death."

She smiled sadly. "I came," she began in a whisper, "when they decided to—to sacrifice you. Attol was—was angry when he—learned of their death. He would have a victim. I heard him, and then stole away to—to—be with you."

"They're coming after me?" Hugo asked, still smiling. "Well, they won't find me. I'm going to follow their other victims. See, Ah-se-watti, the White Pool is not so dreadful! A plunge, and all is over. Will you go with me?"

He led her gently to the brink, and pointed down at the swirling waters. She shuddered and clung to him. Then she looked up and smiled

"Yes, I will go with you. I don't want to live—without you," she whispered. "See, I'm not afraid."

She extended a hand that did not tremble. Hugo raised it to his lips, and kissed it reverently.

"There are worse fates," he murmured. "Together we'll take the plunge. The white mist of the pool will be your bridal veil, and the roar of the waters our wedding march. We'll go to our death smiling into each other's eyes, clasped in an embrace that will last for eternity."

"Manoin, when he knows how much we loved, may forgive us," she replied wistfully. "We will plead together before him in the blessed isle of rest."

"Yes, he will forgive, and—and——"

He raised his head in startled fear. The distant pattering of innumerable feet on stone floors reached their ears. The dwarfs were coming again.

Trembling, but with heads held high and eyes sparkling, they waited and listened until the pattering grew louder and nearer, and from the cave emerged the van of the army of dwarfs. It was not a religious procession this time, accompanied by the wild chant, but a horde of warriors armed with spears and wooden swords. At their head towered Attol, his face drawn in anger and malevolent passion. Ah-se-watti's escape had been discovered, and all the jealousy of his savage nature was aroused at the sight of the two lovers perched high on the brink of the pool.

With a loud, guttural war-cry, Attol brandished his spear and leaped ahead of his men, encouraging them by word and deed to follow. The black fellow's face flashed in the sunlight with all the hideousness of a devil.

Ah-se-watti unconsciously shivered, and, with a little nervous cry of fear, clutched Hugo's arm; she hid her face on his shoulder to shut from view the awful sight that threatened her.

"Never fear, Ah-se-watti," Hugo soothed, "he'll never touch you. I'll kill him before we go; we'll take him to Manoin's blessed isle with us."

He raised his gun to shoot, but a small hand restrained him. "No, no, let him live," she cried excitedly. "I don't want him to go there with us. Let him live! Let him live!"

"You're right," replied Hugo, pocketing his weapon. "I guess we don't want him along to spoil our happiness. We'll leave him here. Are you ready for the plunge?"

She nodded and clung to him. Hugo clasped her in his arms and stood looking down at the boiling waters. Attol, as if divining their intention, stopped suddenly and raised a warning cry of alarm. Hugo smiled and waved a hand.

"Good-by, Attol! May you live many years in this hell-hole!"

He turned to kiss the white, ashen lips so close to his; but Attol crouched to throw his spear. Fearful lest he might balk them at the last moment, Hugo picked Ah-se-watti in his arms and leaped clear of the rocks.

Something whizzed swiftly through the air and crashed on the rocks where they had stood, splintering its head into a thousand fragments. Attol's aim had been sure and deadly. Hugo's last impression was of a face drawn into hideous distortions, a splintered spear-head lying on the rocks, a bright, coppery sun burning overhead; and then a cold plunge into water that blotted out everything.

A little shiver ran through Ah-se-watti, a sigh, and her body clung tightly to him. A rush and roar of water in their ears; a horrible sucking sensation, a downward rush, and a giddy feeling that they were being whirled around and around! Their lungs panted for breath until it seemed as if they would burst.

The sickening sensation of being sucked downward into the very bowels of the earth made their heads reel. Down, down, they went in the grasp of a relentless force; an age, an eternity, it seemed to them! The mind began to waver until the relief of unconsciousness seemed to steal over them.

Just on the brink of death, their downward descent was checked; their bodies hung in the balance—held suspended in space it seemed—and then with accelerated speed they began to rise—not slowly and leisurely like a diver, but swiftly and with incredible speed. They were still in the grasp of some elemental power that it was useless to combat; the same current that had sucked them down was now drawing them up again.

Hugo felt that he could not endure the strain on his heart and lungs any longer; he was yielding to the desire to sleep, and cease struggling. The last vestige of his strength was exhausted, and his resistance was at an end. He opened his mouth to give the panting lungs a chance

Instead of water he gulped a mouthful of air—cold, pure, fresh air. His head was out of water and he was gasping and strangling for breath, inhaling the life-giving air like a fish on land. He was conscious of nothing else than the desire to breathe and breathe, to suck the air in in great mouthfuls.

Then he became conscious of the burden in his arms. He was still clinging to Ah-se-watti, and her arms were about his neck; her face was close to his, cold, wet and still, her body limp as a rag.

Unable to speak, and still gasping for breath, he drew her head farther out of the water and breathed frantically in her mouth, struggling to keep himself up, meanwhile, with both legs and one disengaged arm. A long, shivery sigh escaped the cold lips finally, and with a joyful murmur Hugo began swimming to keep them from sinking again.

They were in total darkness, but the water was cold and swift, carrying them along like so much driftwood. The rippling of the rushing underground stream reminded him of the Death River and vaguely he wondered if they were going through it again. It was all so strange and unreal that he could not bring his mind to grasp the situation. The Cave Dwarfs, the White Pool, the Mountain of Gold! Everything, except Ah-se-watti, seemed a part of a dream. Were they journeying to Manoin's blessed isle of rest? Was Ah-se-watti right in her belief? Did Manoin rule the world after all?

A dim light ahead disturbed him from his dream. He was vaguely conscious of its increasing size and intensity. It drew nearer and nearer, and then a flood of sunshine blotted out the darkness.

They were out of the underground stream, they were out of the volcano's crater; they were out of Death River; they were out into God's world again! The stream on which they were floating was bright and green with tropical vegetation; birds caroled and sang from the branches of the trees; wild animals slunk in the shadows of the jungle; the sweet fragrance of a million flowers assailed their nostrils.

For one giddy moment Hugo took in the scenery, believing it still all a part of his dream, and was content to drift, and breathe and live. Then a glance at the wet face resting on his shoulder aroused him.

"Ah-se-watti!" he cried. "Are you alive! Speak, dear, speak! We're out of the cave—out of the White Pool—we're saved—saved!"

(Continued on page seventeen.)

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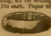
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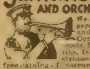

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Tailor—"It can't be helped."

"If your envelopes contained your name and address they would be returned without expense."

"Yes, but then the people who receive them wouldn't open them."

The Mountain of Gold.

(Continued from page fifteen.)

The blue eyes opened, and stared uncomprehendingly at him; a smile came into the face, and the arms clung tighter to his neck; then with a little sigh she lapsed into unconsciousness.

Hugo swam to the nearest shore, and carried her up to a dry place. For ten minutes he worked over her, breathing into her mouth, rolling her from side to side, chafing her hands and arms, all the while frantically calling upon her to speak.

Slowly, ever so slowly, the color returned to her lips and face, and the eyes opened and looked at him. There was a world of love and affection in them.

"We're saved, Ah-se-watti!" he repeated over and over again, punctuating it with hysterical sobs and gulps. "We're back to God's world—our world!"

It was a narrow but turbulent mountain stream that had cast them up—a continuation of Death River, which, after plunging through the White Pool into a subterranean tunnel, took an upward turn and debouched upon the plains beyond the volcanic peak. It flowed less turbulently, and soon broadened out into a river that eventually found its way into the sea.

After recovering from their exhaustion, Hugo and Ah-se-watti found their way to a settlement by following the bank of the river. They heard vague reports on their way of Bergmasson and Professor Zenda which overjoyed them: they, too, had made [illegible] safely. A timely message sent [illegible] foot [illegible] the jungles, and relayed by telegraph to John, caught Bergmasson just in time to prevent him from making another trip through Death River, as he had promised, to rescue Hugo and Ah-se-watti from their terrible prison.

* * * * * * *

At the last meeting of the British Society for the Advancement of Science, Professor Zenda read before his colleagues a [illegible] paper on the Cave Dwarfs of New Guinea. The paper was received with scant and open skepticism, and one magazine reporting it proclaimed it to be a fine piece of fiction, but without doubt of no real value to science. It was broadly hinted that the learned ethnologist had reached an age when his observations and deductions could no longer be accepted as trustworthy.

Hugo and Ah-se-watti, happily located in their home on the outskirts of London, devote such time as they can find from their own pleasures to soothing the outraged feelings of the discredited scientist, who, to make amends for the crime he committed against Professor Vorril and Mary, his wife, is lavishing all the devotions of an old man upon their daughter.

Sometimes they dream of the Mountain of Gold, buried away there in the bowels of the earth, and of Attol and his Cave Dwarfs, imprisoned in the volcano's crater to guard Manoin's treasure. But they have no desire to return to gather the gold, or to tell another of its presence lest he experience the horrors that afflicted them and nearly brought them to the door of death.

As for Bergmasson—he's in [illegible] or New Guinea hunting for orchids. But once a year he takes a hurried trip to England that he may gaze into the eyes of one who reminds him of his lost love, renewing his youth thereby and his belief that all is well in the world, whether Manoin rules or a more merciful god.

The End.

❦ ❦ ❦

MAN'S ULTIMATUM.

Oh, women, they're just as clever
[illegible]
[illegible] angel
[illegible] a beast,
[illegible] "instinct" betters reason;
There's nothing they can't do;
They pay their share of taxes;
Their names are in Who's Who;
[illegible]
[illegible]
We quite agree that woman
Is neither drudge nor slave—
BUT
[illegible] the suffrage
[illegible]
[illegible] confounded garments
[illegible] button up the back!

❦ ❦ ❦

Noah in a Nursery.

Note.—The following is a verbatim report of a conversation between a father and his 4-year-old boy. The father was trying to put the child to sleep.

"Tell me a story, papa."

"What shall I tell?"

"About the porcupine."

"Suppose I tell you a new one, about Noah and the Ark?"

"Noah?"

"Yes."

"Who was Noah?"

"I'll tell you about it."

"All right, tell about Noah."

Settles himself comfortably in his father's lap and listens.

"Once upon a time, a long time ago, all the people on the earth were so bad that the Lord decided to destroy all of them but Noah."

"Why, what did they do?"

"Oh, they were bad."

"Well, what did they do bad?"

"They did all kinds of bad things."

"Like [illegible]?"

"Yes, and worse."

"Did the policemen [illegible]?"

"Yes."

"And did they [illegible] men's clubs?"

"Yes, and a lot of other bad things. Keep still now and let me tell you the story."

"Did they take away the policemen's stars?"

"Yes, and so the Lord ——"

"Did the policemens put them in the jail house?"

"Yes, yes; you keep quiet now and I'll tell you all about it. And so the Lord said he would send a big rain and drown all the people but Noah and his family."

Boy jerks upward into sitting position and asks earnestly:

"Drown them?"

"Yes, drown them."

"In the river?"

"No, not in the river, drown them with a big rain."

"Pour water on 'em?"

"No, no; the big rain came down for forty days and forty nights and the water arose until it covered the earth."

"And floated this house away?"

"No, not this house. This house wasn't built then."

"Well, when is it going to do it?"

"It did do it a long, long time ago. The Lord told Noah to build a big ship and to take his family in there and two of every animal on the earth. And he did, two elephants, two lions, two tigers——"

"And two bears?"

"Yes, two bears, and——"

"And two mousies?"

"Yes, and two mousies——"

"And did the bears eat the mousies?"

"No, no."

"Well, why didn't they?"

"Noah put them in different rooms."

"Oh, papa, where did you hear that story?"

"I read it in the Bible. Now lie still and listen or I won't tell it. And Noah put all the animals in it and then the Lord sent the big rain and the water came up, and came up and covered the earth and drowned all the people except Noah and his family."

"All the babies, too?"

"Yes, everybody."

"The little babies?"

"Yes."

"And their mammas?"

"Yes."

"The Lord's a bad man, isn't he, papa?"

"No, no, child, the Lord is the good man up in the sky. Don't you know? You pray to him every night. Now listen. And so it rained and the water came up until it floated Noah's ark away."

"Floated it away?"

"Yes."

"Did it break in two?"

"No, it just floated on the water."

"And was Noah in it?"

"Yes."

"Why didn't all the people get in?"

"Noah wouldn't let them."

"Noah was a mean man, wasn't he?"

"No, he was a good man."

"No, sir, he was mean, and the Lord was mean, too. Didn't he drown the little babies and their mammas?"

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do."

"What?"

"You lie still and I'll tell you about the porcupine."

❦ ❦ ❦

Fooled Him.

Old John [illegible] sitting in his shirt sleeves [illegible] puffing like mad at his pipe, and never getting a puff of smoke from it.

As Smith drew near John struck three matches and held them to the bowl, and sucked and sucked till his cheeks seemed to meet inside, but still never a puff of smoke.

And burnt matches lay around his chair. There must have been a boxful of them.

"Why, John, what on earth are you doing?" asked Smith.

"That chump White's been trying to fool me, I expect," said John, and he took another futile puff and put his pipe down [illegible].

"That chump White told me that if I smoked a bit of glass I should see the spots on [illegible]."

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1,250,000

COPIES WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS

Is love an asset or a liability?

A one-sided quarrel is soon ended.

Blood will tell—and so will a black eye.

Cupid could give the fool killer a lot of pointers.

Better one boil on the stove than two on the neck.

And too much learning is also a dangerous thing.

It takes a woman to settle a man who is made of dust.

Fools often rush in where angels fear to use their wings.

Many a man walks around and runs a risk at the same time.

But there are times when it is better to leap before looking.

The mule that gets in the first kick usually wins the scrap.

Most of us need the money because that is what money is for.

Figures may not lie, but some of them get tangled up in statistics.

People who believe that rock and rye will cure a cold usually have one.

If you fuss about the weather it may be a sign that you are getting old.

The average woman gets off a trolley car and a joke in the same manner.

It is easy for a knocker to get a large audience—because the show is free.

How scornfully a woman who merely powders can look at one who paints!

If you can extract 50 per cent of real joy from the enjoyments you plan you are lucky.

If a young man's cake is "dough," he can easily find a girl who is willing to take the cake.

My son, there are two things you should never borrow—money or trouble, especially trouble.

Dame Fortune is a stranger to the majority of people, but her daughter, Miss Fortune, calls on them daily.

If a man is unable to boast of what his ancestors accomplished, it's up to him to do something worth while on his own account.

A man may take on sufficient liquor to disable his conscience temporarily, but it will be doing business at the old stand next morning.

A man may have a lot of sense, but the chances are he will not display any of it when he gets into an argument with a pretty woman.

ANECDOTES

Once Again.

Elmer Bates, erstwhile Cleveland newspaper man, more recently a country journalist, was coming up West Sixth street from the Union depot the other morning, when he was halted by an old-time pensioner.

"I'm—I'm afraid I don't recognize you," faltered Elmer, not quite truthfully. For this person had held him up for many a piece of silver in the old days.

"Why, yes," insisted the other, "you once saved my life."

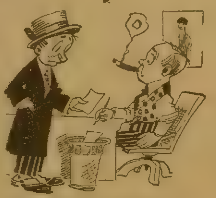
"I did?" asked Bates, removing his glasses and wiping them carefully, as visions of bread cast upon the waters arose before him.

"Don't you remember? I was trying to get to Chicago to bury my poor old mother. You staked me to supper, lodging and breakfast, got me a ticket to Chicago, and gave me three dollars for spending money."

"Oh, yes—I remember now! I'm so glad I helped you, dear old chap!"

"Yes, dear old chap," was the answer. "And I knew I'd meet you again some day. Listen: I'm in the same fix again."

❧



Asker—"Would you indorse my note for $500?"

Tellit—"Would you pay it at maturity?"

Asker—"I certainly would."

Tellit—"Then I couldn't indorse it! I've got a weak heart and a shock like that might kill me!"

❧

Fooled by a Widow.

H. P. Cady, a chemistry professor at the University of Kansas, tells this story of a seedy-looking man who stole noiselessly into a chemist's office and closed the door softly behind him.

"Kin anybody hear what I say in here?" he asked anxiously.

"Not a soul," the chemist assured him.

Whereupon the man produced a package carefully wrapped, and handed it to the chemist with the query: "What is this stuff, anyway?"

After examining the contents, the chemist replied: "Why, that is iron pyrites, commonly known as fool's gold."

"What's it worth?" asked the seedy fellow.

"Oh, about three dollars a ton in carload lots."

"Just my pesky luck!" exclaimed the questioner. "Dern if I ain't the biggest fool in the world. I found a lot of that stuff on a widder's farm an' went an' married the widder."

❧

The Way to Stop It.

A rich, but exceedingly mean man, residing in upper New York, who had an excellent wine cellar, but poor wine, found that in spite of its quality some one of his servants was always stealing it. He called his butler, who was in a chronic state of disgust at his employer's stinginess, and said:

"Thomas, this has got to stop! It is your business to attend to such matters. Now, what would you suggest as the most practical way to preserve this wine?"

"I don't know, sir," replied the butler, "unless you put something that's better worth drinking alongside of it."

❧

A Grand Nation.

An old Scottish gardener was showing to a tourist the beauties of the loch and of the little village of Duddingston. It was evening, and as he expatiated on the lovely scene and on the glories of his country the moon rose over the hill. The old man stopped short in the middle of a sentence and gazed at the moon in admiration. Then he turned to the tourist and said:

"There's a moon for ye! I tell ye, mon, we're a grand nation!"

❧

Wondered How He Died.

There is a young man in Boston who can actually trace his family back two generations. His one failing is a desire to be thought a descendant of one of "the old families," and his studio—he says he is an artist—contains a number of heirlooms. One thing which he takes particular pride in is a Continental uniform, complete in every detail, with flintlock and powder horn. He was showing this to a young lady the other day.

"My great-grandfather wore this suit when he gave his life to his country during the brave days of the Revolution!" he said.

The young lady inspected the uniform carefully, but could find neither bullet nor saber cut. She turned to him with a charming smile.

"Oh! Was the poor old gentleman drowned?" she asked.

❧

Her Prayers.

Mrs. Emily P. Bishop, author of "Seventy Years Young," tells this little story to illustrate the fact that it is as easy to do as to wish to do.

A little girl's brother set a trap to catch birds. The little girl knew that it was wrong, cruel, against the laws of kindness, and altogether inexcusable. She wept at first, then her mother noticed that she became cheerful again, and she was asked the cause.

"I prayed for my brother to be a better boy."

"What else?" inquired her mother.

"I prayed that the trap would not catch any little birds."

"What else?"

"Then I went out and kicked the old trap all to pieces."

❧

Wonderful Inventions.

At the Lambs one night a number of players, forsaking for once talk of shop, were discussing the wonders of invention and of discovery during the last century, when De Wolf Hopper got fresh.

During the lull in the conversation the tall comedian ventured to observe, with becoming gravity, that to him the most wonderful of inventions was dynamite.

"Why dynamite?" asked some one, falling for Hopper's gag.

"Because there's nothing in the world that can hold a candle to it," said Hopper.

Whereupon they chased him from the place.

❧

His Impression.

When W. D. Howells, the famous American writer, was editing an American magazine a young man called on him at the office and offered him a poem. Mr. Howells read the poem and thought it was good, but somehow it seemed familiar.

"Did you write this unaided?"

"I did," replied the youthful poet. "I wrote every line of it."

"Then I am glad to meet you, Lord Byron," said Mr. Howells. "But I was under the impression that you had died some years ago."

❧

The Right Road.

A man passed the Potomac eastward below Bladensburgh, that being his destination. Coming to the main road he turned to the right, and after walking some distance and seeing no sign of the place, called to a farmhand trudging slowly along just ahead of him and said: "Say, my man, can you tell me whether I am on the right road to Bladensburgh?"

"Yes, sir," replied the countryman, "but if you want to get there you had better turn around and go the other way."

❧

Agreed With the Professor.

A certain careless student is a small college suffered from obesity, and it appears that even college professors do not love a fat man. One day, after a particularly unsuccessful recitation in mathematics, the instructor said scornfully: "Well, Mr. Blank, you are better fed than taught."

"That's right, professor," sighed the youth, subsiding heavily into his chair. "You teach me—I feed myself."

❧

Not Easy to Raise.

Orville Wright, congratulated at a banquet in Dayton upon a recent legal victory, said:

"Now, our law business ended, we can go to work on the business of developing aeroplanes. For, though the aeroplane has passed its infancy, it will still stand improvement here and there.

"Yes, the aeroplane, I am glad to say, is no longer in its infancy—and, gentlemen, it was mighty hard to raise."

❧

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THE INCA'S EYE

Or, Oscar Mayne's Adventures

By Captain Jack Judson

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Begun in No. 11, March 13. Subscriptions can begin with that issue or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents or by mail from the office of publication.

CHAPTER X.

ONCE MORE IN THE TOILS.

WE LEFT Oscar in the darkness of Mother Fez's den, with the deadly green reptile coiled about his wrist. The light had been put out by the old hag, leaving the small apartment wrapped in darkness, and the boy at the mercy of hag and snake. He felt the icy touch of the serpent on his skin, and knew not how soon it would sink its poisonous fangs into his flesh and terminate his adventures. It was a perilous moment. He dared not essay to reach the snake to strangle it for fear of bringing his hand in contact with its teeth. Cold sweat came out on his temples in great drops as he thought of the situation.

He heard the hag laugh in the gloom. Suddenly there came to his ears the noise of turmoil in the street without. Drake's men were pursuing a lot of Spaniards, and as the cries of battle entered the den Oscar took hope. Something fell against the door. It immediately yielded and Oscar knew that a man had fallen into the room. Others followed and there a fight in the dark, while the English boy held his breath.

"We've finished one Spanish rat!" some one cried out. "Let's have a light so as to see what sort of a nest we have got into."

Then came the noise of striking flints, and a little light came into being. Oscar uttered a cry of joy, for Dominick stood before him.

"Quick, Dominick!" he exclaimed, thrusting out his arm. "Kill the death adder, for heaven's sake."

The old sailor sprang forward with distended eyes.

"It's the labari, boy!" he exclaimed. "Has the reptile bitten you?"

"Not yet Dominick, but——"

The answer was a sudden sweep of Dominick's knife, and the head of the snake fell to the floor.

"Don't lose the woman," cried Oscar. "Don't let Mother Fez escape."

"Who is Mother Fez?"

"She has the Inca's Eye."

Dominick threw a searching look around the room.

"She is gone," he cried. "How did she get the Inca's Eye?"

"She robbed Mercedes."

Dominick's companions left the house, but Oscar and his companion rummaged it with the most intense eagerness.

"She has escaped us," sighed the boy. "Now the treasure of the world is lost again."

"But not for long if San Quentin still holds the hag," cursed Dominick.

They bolted out of the house in time to find themselves facing a band of soldiers whom the Governor had rallied.

"It's cut and run," cried Dominick. "The wolves are too many for us."

They bolted away amid a shower of musket balls, several of which pierced their clothing, but no blood was drawn.

Meanwhile Drake's men were looting the town. They had broken into the Governor's palace and were ransacking it from top to bottom, picking up here and there valuables of every sort.

"We must find the Inca's Eye," exclaimed Dominick, who could think of nothing else.

"Aye, that we must."

Not long thereafter Drake withdrew from the town but the two friends found themselves cooped up in it and once more in the direst peril. The air was full of cries for vengeance. Suddenly Oscar stopped and clutched Dominick's arm.

"Look into the shadow of the old church yonder," he whispered. "Do you see anything?"

"I see a human figure," answered Dominick, drawing his pistol. Ha! it is a woman——"

"And Mother Fez" said Oscar.

This sent the sailor forward and in an instant the was gripping a body at which he was staring like mad.

"It is the old hag sure enough," said Oscar, coming up. "She must have the Inca's Eye concealed on her person."

"But she is dead, my boy."

"Dead?" gasped Drake's young tar. "No, no, Dominick, it can not be!"

"Look for yourself." Dominick pulled his captive forward. Oscar recoiled at the sight he saw. Mother Fez was dead, with a gaping wound in her throat.

"But the stone? The slayer may have overlooked it," the boy cried.

The search was vain, and Dominick, with a growl of disappointment, cast the body from him

"Lost again!" cried the boy. "Now it may be lost forever."

They turned from the spot with feelings impossible to describe, and for some moments neither spoke. At that moment a lurid light leaped heavenward and brightened all the sky.

"The palace is burning," cried Oscar as he stared at the glare. "The light will reveal us."

"This way, then," replied Dominick, and he pulled his young companion away.

Fiercer and fiercer grew the fire. The beautiful palace, which had just been sacked, was doomed. From the heart of a dark shadow Dominick and Oscar watched the fire. The Governor ran around like one demented, bewailing the loss of his palace, and hundreds of men stood like statues looking on.

"We must get out of here," said Dominick.

"But the Inca's Eye?"

"Some other time for that," was the reply "Perhaps it will be taken back to the Jeweled Cave."

The two friends now attempted to make their escape from the Spanish town. If discovered it meant death.

"The ladder yonder," cried Oscar. "It stands against the wall."

"So it does, lad," and Dominick bounded in that direction.

He was halfway up the ladder when a loud shout told that he was seen. Oscar was just behind him and the shout went to his heart like a tocsin of doom. There were half a dozen shots, and the body of Dominick toppled and then fell backward. Oscar saw it shoot over his head and land heavily on the ground Twenty Spaniards and half-breed Indians rushed forward, and in a moment the young adventurer was in a cordon of weapons, with the owners shouting all manner of threats in his ears.

It was useless to resist. He was seized by half a dozen merciless hands and dragged away. Dominick was left where he had fallen, and Oscar sighed to think that he had lost his friend and companion.

"Throw him into the fire," screeched a woman who came forward with a huge machete in her hand. "Feed the young English rat to the flames!"

"No, we have a better doom for him than that," was the response.

Oscar could only look into the baleful eyes of his captors and wonder what his doom was to be. Ten minutes later he found himself in a little room partly illuminated by a solitary candle. Standing against the wall was a desperate-looking wretch who had but one eye, a man who looked half beast. A bloody red kerchief was tied about his head, rendering him more hideous than ever, and in the single eye was more blood lust than Oscar had ever dreamed of. He continued to regard the boy, who had been thrown upon a rude cot of straw and completely disarmed. All at once the guard began to creep forward. Oscar suddenly discovered that he carried a long knife in one hand.

"How does my bird like his cage?" grinned the Spaniard

Oscar did not reply.

The rascal crouched on the floor in front of the cot and continued to glare at his prisoner.

"You don't expect to see England again?" he went on in tantalizing tones. "A pretty sail you've had with your Sir Francis, but it's ended now."

Then to Oscar's surprise the man fell back and began to draw one dark finger along the edge of the knife.

"I'm Gregorio, the executioner," he said, looking up. "First I'll clip your wings and then I'll finish you"

He rose and started forward, the hatred of a lifetime in his eyes. Oscar drew against the wall with a shudder The knife was raised, when there came a loud report, and the wretch quivered a mass of dying humanity, in the candlelight. Oscar, with a cry, turned to the window from which the shot of deliverance had come.

CHAPTER XI

RICH FOR A TIME

AT SIGHT of the vanishing face revealed for an instant by the flickering candle, the boy uttered a cry, for it was the face of Mercedes. The guard lay dead on the floor, and Oscar, seeing this, sprang over the body and tried the door. He was in the dark street in a moment, and there his wrist was circled by the girl's hand.

"It is death to remain in San Quentin!" she exclaimed

"I know. The wretch inside was about to dispatch me when you came to the rescue."

They were off in a minute, and did not pause again till they were at the south wall. Oscar was the first to speak.

"Mother Fez is dead," said he.

"Yes, she stole the Inca's Eye from me and vengeance has overtaken her."

"But the diamond?" asked the boy eagerly

"I have it."

"You?"

"Yes, senor."

"But you did not kill Mother Fez?"

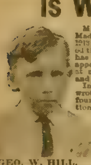
"I did not slay the old hag. The person who did overlooked the treasure of the world."

Oscar rejoiced secretly

A rough ladder stood against the wall, but he was loath to put a foot on a rung without knowing what was to become of the Inca's Eye

"Go up," commanded Mercedes. "I

Asthma Sufferer
Is Well Again



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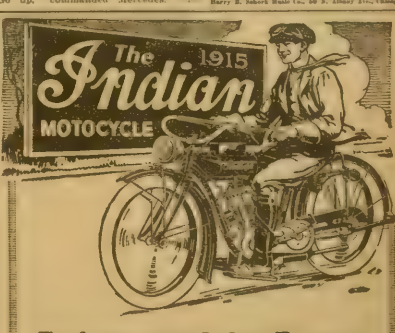

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you are caught here it will mean death."

"But the treasure?" Oscar looked into the depths of her glowing eyes.

"Does it not belong to me, senor?" she smiled.

"Why to you?"

There was a frown on the boy's face.

"Go," cried the girl. "There is the ladder that leads to liberty."

"Show me the Inca's Eye."

Mercedes dropped one hand into her bosom, and when she withdrew it, lo! the wonder of the world glittered in her brown palm.

Oscar Mayne uttered a cry of wonder.

"Quick!" exclaimed the girl with a sudden start. "I hear footsteps. In a moment it will be too late."

A strange fury took possession of Drake's young sailor. He was being forced away without the Inca's Eye, and if he went then he might never see it again. All at once he seized the girl and forced her against the wall. Madness gnawed at his heartstrings. He was, for the passing moment, more fiend than boy.

"Give me the Eye!" he cried. "Give me the treasure of the world and I will go."

The girl's eyes flashed with resentment.

"I will not!" she sent hissingly into his teeth. "It belongs to Mercedes."

"By the living gods I will take it by force!" was the retort; and Oscar thrust one hand into her bosom and seized the prize.

Then, with a cry of triumph, he sprang to the foot of the ladder, and placed one foot on the lowest rung. She was after him with the fury of a tiger cat.

"Senor, the possession of the Inca's Eye means death. May death come swiftly to you!"

Oscar laughed in her face, which had grown strangely white. He reached the top of the wall and looked down on the other side, sheer twenty feet to the ground.

"You will never reach your camp alive," came up to him from the girl below.

A derisive laugh was the boy's answer, and then, lowering himself over the edge of the wall, he let himself drop. He alighted on his feet with the agility of a cat but so heavily that his whole body felt the tremendous shock. For a minute his head swam, and pains darted through him in every direction. When at last he pulled himself together, he started off, making sure that he had not lost the treasure in the jump. Suddenly he stopped and looked back. It seemed to him that there were fifty men between him and the wall.

Ah, he knew what had happened! Mercedes had set the hounds of San Quentin on his track, and why not? Had he not robbed her of the Inca's Eye, even after she had saved his life?

Several torches were already lighting up the forest, and he could distinguish the forms of his hunters. After one look he started on again. In a little while he paused and leaned against a tree. He had sprained an ankle by the leap from the wall, and now it was giving him intense pain.

The men of San Quentin had not abandoned the pursuit, as he could tell by sounds which still reached his ears. Perhaps Mercedes was with them, still keeping them on the trail. When again he tried to run he uttered a cry of agony and sank to the ground. The end seemed near.

At that moment a thought shot through his brain, and he seized one of the drooping boughs of the nearest tree, and with difficulty and pain drew himself up from the ground.

On, on came the wolves of the walled town. They rushed past under the tree, and Oscar heard them as they vanished in the distance.

"I was in the nick of time," thought he in self-congratulation. "They would have had me but for the tree."

He remained on his perch for several hours. The hunters did not come back that way. When at last he clambered down, the forest was still, and no torches were in sight.

"Now for Sir Francis!" he exclaimed, as his sprain felt better. "I wonder what became of Dominick?"

He felt so much improved that he was able to make good headway. For some time he moved forward, till he suddenly confronted a poor hut which stood alone in the forest.

"A little rest will do me good," said he. "Time enough yet to get to Sir Francis with the treasure of the world." And he entered the shack, which had no door.

It was dark inside. Oscar began to feel his way around the rough walls of the place.

"I've got the Inca's Eye yet," he said aloud to himself, and his voice seemed to pierce every crevice of the hut. "It is worth all the loot Sir Francis got at San Quentin."

The last word had barely left his lips when his ankles were encircled by a pair of cold hands, and he was pulled from the wall.

"What did you say you have?" hissed a voice that went through him like arrows of icy steel. "What's that about the Inca's Eye?"

Oscar felt his very heart stand still.

"I'll take what you've got," continued the same merciless tone. "I've been looking for that same gem myself for twenty years, but the fates haven't been good to Jack Borrow, who came out from old Plymouth in the good ship Seagull. The Inca's Eye, is it?" And the speaker laughed till Oscar felt his pulses rise.

"I'm English, too," he said. "I belong to Sir Francis Drake's ship, the Golden Swan——"

"I don't care anything where you belong. So you have the treasure of the world? Well, I'll just take it."

Oscar drew back with a gasp.

What, was he going to lose the prize again?

"I've risked my life for the Inca's Eye, Master Borrow," he pleaded.

"Not oftener than I have in this infernal country," was the reply.

Oscar felt that he had fallen into the hands of a desperate man.

"You don't care to part with the gem, I see," continued the sailor. "Very well. I guess I'm strong enough to take it,' and Oscar was dexterously thrown to the ground with the fellow on top.

It was a hunt in the dark, but the boy knew that he was no match for Jack Borrow.

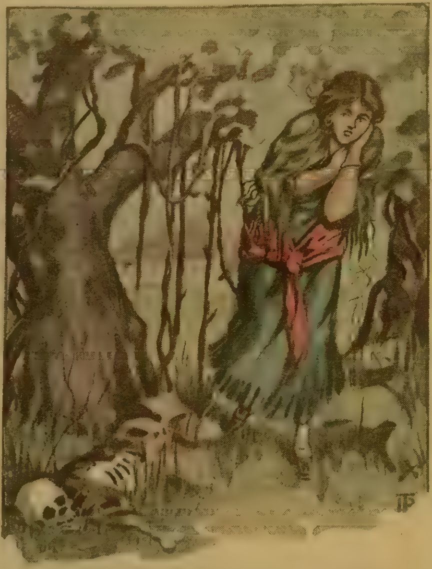
The eager hands of the man went to work with fiendish joy

"Ha! what's this?" Oscar heard him exclaim. "By my life, it must be the treasure of the world. Why, it's as big as an egg!"

The boy said nothing. He heard the man walk to the entrance of the hut, where he began to examine the diamond in the uncertain light that sifted through the trees.

"Thank 'e werry much, boy," Borrow said. "It's the easiest luck I've ever had. Now, I kin go back to Plymouth and be richer than Queen Bess herself."

Oscar did not reply. He saw the despoiler move away and found himself the sole occupant of the hut. He had been robbed of the Inca's Eye, but then, was it not just retribution? Had he not plundered Mercedes of the same gem?



"I caught the glitter of something among the white bones."

CHAPTER XII.

AT LAST.

IT WAS two years later. Sir Francis Drake had returned from another voyage to the South Seas, and old Plymouth had welcomed him back. The Golden Swan was once more anchored in the harbor and all Plymouth was wild with excitement.

Oscar Mayne, who had not gone out on this voyage, was among those in the vast throng that made merry over the return. To him the Inca's Eye was lost forever. Old Dominick had turned up in time to come home with him, for the Spaniards had failed to slay him in their last effort to escape and the same had ever since bewailed the loss of the Inca's Eye.

Sir Francis had not been very successful in his last expedition; in fact, he had almost lost his vessel, and was glad to get home with his life.

It was the night after the return that Oscar, upon turning a corner, saw a young girl pursued by four or five ruffians, who were acting like wolves in their chase. The rascals were fast gaining on her, when the sturdy English boy, seizing a stave, threw himself between the girl and her enemies, and by his demeanor caused the villains to halt. The girl flew past him with a thankful cry.

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"If you can," answered Oscar defiantly, and he swept his novel weapon before him and landed the foremost scoundrel on the ground.

The rest, fearing the stave, which Oscar knew well how to wield, took to their heels and scampered off.

"They're a tough lot," he said, addressing the intended victim of the gang, as he joined her. They——"

He got no farther, for he recoiled with a cry stared at the person whom he had rescued. It was Mercedes of San Quentin! The recognition was mutual.

"I thank you, senor," said the girl. "You did not expect to see me here?"

"No," answered Oscar, and then he thought of their last meeting.

"I came back with Sir Francis," Mercedes continued, a little smile wreathing her pretty lips. "I grew tired of San Quentin and its beasts."

It was on Oscar's lips to ask her if she knew anything about the Inca's Eye, but he desisted. He thought an apology would be the proper thing.

"I'm sorry I treated you as I did," he began when Mercedes raised her hand.

"Please say no more," said she. "I know you wanted the treasure of the world. But you lost it again?"

"Yes, it was taken from me by a renegade sailor named Jack Borrow."

"What became of him?"

"I know not. He made off with the gem, which he said he had been hunting for years. Therefore the gem is forever lost; and what a stone it was!"

The old smile came back to the girl's face.

"Will you come with me?" she asked. "I have secured lodgings for the present near the wharf and I think we will not be molested there."

Osccar readily assented, and in a few minutes he was ushered into a plainly furnished chamber where, upon a table, burned a small brass lamp.

"So," resumed Mercedes, when she had locked the door. "So you think the Inca's Eye is lost?"

"Why, is it not gone forever?" queried the boy. "There's no telling what became of Jack Borrow."

"I can tell you, senor."

"You?"

The girl nodded.

"One day, a year after you lost the Eye, I came across a human skeleton in the forest, not very far from San Quentin. It was the skeleton of a man. I was about to pass it, for there are many such grisly things in those terrible woods, when I caught the glitter of something among the white bones. In another moment I had it in my hand, and lo! I was staring at the most beautiful thing in the world, the Inca's Eye."

"No!" exclaimed the boy, losing his breath.

"It is true," answered the girl. "Seeing is believing, isn't it, senor?"

"It surely is."

Mercedes rose to her feet and crossed the room. Oscar saw her take a small box from a niche in the wall and come back to him.

"This is not the iron chest that held the great jewel in the cave of the fishmen," she went on. "Look for yourself, senor." And to Oscar's consternation she held toward him the veritable treasure of the world in the shape of the Inca's Eye. The boy could not speak.

"I am in a quandary," continued Mercedes, breaking the silence. "If I go back to Spain with this gem I will be thrown into prison and robbed without mercy. Do you know what it is worth, senor?"

"More than a king's ransom," was the reply.

"I dare not keep it, for the old legend runs that its owner is never safe while it remains in his hands."

"I believe I would run the risk of the legend," smiled Oscar.

Mercedes toyed with the stone till Oscar's mouth watered and he felt a strange twitching of his hands.

"I wonder," said the girl at last, "if your Queen, the great Elizabeth, would buy it?"

"She would give half her kingdom for it!" exclaimed the youth.

"But I don't want any of Queen Bess's dominions," almost hissed Mercedes. "I would take her gold, but not a tithe of her realm."

"I think I can manage it," said Oscar. "Sir Francis is still in Plymouth, and he is honest, no matter what his enemies say of him."

"If I only thought so after what he did to my people at San Quentin!"

They rattled on at this rate for almost an hour, and wound up by agreeing that Oscar should tell Sir Francis about the gem.

The following day the Admiral entered the abode of the Spanish girl, and beheld with his own eyes the great treasure. Mercedes parted with it and in a short time it was placed before Queen Elizabeth, who went into raptures over it. The price she paid for it was enormous, and when Oscar again visited Mercedes she spread before him the heap of coin which the Inca's Eye had brought. With a little laugh, she divided it into two piles, one of which she shoved toward the nonplused lad.

"That is for you," said she. "The rest I will take to Spain, and I will be a lady there the rest of my life."

"And I?——"

"Oh, you will be the richest young gentleman in all England!"

"And I will give Dominick enough to keep him the remainder of his life. He'll quit the sea and be a gentleman, too, the best he knows how."

They laughed together.

Thus, through all its strange adventures, the Inca's Eye came to England after all, and found its place among the crown jewels. When the great Queen died, it was placed on her bosom and became lost again to the world.

For years afterward Oscar and old Dominick would meet and revive their adventures in the land of the Inca's sojourn, and the old sailor would refill his pipe and chatter of the time when he had almost lost his life among the wolves of San Quentin.

Mercedes returned to her native land, and one day Oscar received an invitation to her wedding with one of the nobility, all because of the wealth she brought him from the sale of the treasure of the world.

I have no doubt that if the rich casket that contains the remains of England's greatest monarch were opened the Inca's Eye would again flash out its wonderful beauty to the light, and the entire kingdom would stand amazed. But that day will never dawn, and the most beautiful gem that ever came from the mines of old Peru is perhaps lost forever.

The End.

* * *

ZODIACAL INFLUENCE.

To truths astrology once taught
Men give today but little thought;
And yet the zodiac, I think,
Has often driven men to drink,
I made the usual vow last Jan.
To be henceforth a water man;
And oh, I felt so dry in Feb.
The Fishes, stranded in the ebb,
The blustering, battering Ram of Mar.
My resolution helped to jar;
And being tossed by Bull in Ap.
It finally lost form and shape.
Small wonder by the end of May
My double vision Twins obey!
The Crab began his work in June
And made me sing another tune.
But when the Lion roared in Jy.
He made my throat so parched and dry,
The Virgin deemed it wise in Aug.
To give my memory a jog.
The Scales fell from my eyes in Sept.
Once more I vowed; this vow I kept.
But yet the Scorpion stung in Oct.
My conscience, which had got unlocked.
The Archer shot at me all Nov.
And very near to frenzy drove.
I've learned my proper place in Dec.
I've been a Goat—no more, no less.
But 1915 now is here;
I'll make a record new this year!
A veteran, despite my scars,
Once more I'll battle with the stars!

◆

A Nice Man.

"Your husband is such a nice man, Mrs. Burtonby," said her caller, accepting another cup of tea and a peanut butter sandwich and a macaroon and a lady finger. "Your good fortune is the talk of the neighborhood, really."

"If you ever marry again, my dear," replied Mrs. Burtonby, "take my advice and marry a ward boss or a loan shark or a man who robs the public, but don't ever marry a nice man."

"You astonish me! Isn't your life with Mr. Burtonby a happy one?"

"Perfectly, but his being 'such a nice man' adds to the high cost of living. The next time I marry I shall look out for a pirate or a second-story worker."

"Doesn't he treat you well?"

"Perfectly, but what I am trying to convey is that the world is not yet good enough for a nice man to live in. Just to show you: It hasn't been a month since Mrs. Grabmore asked him to loan her our lawn mower, and he took it right over there and, because she shed a crocodile tear at being all alone in the world, he remained right there and mowed her lawn for her, and it is half as large as an ordinary city block, and that isn't the worst of it. He broke a jardiniere which had a fern in it and she permitted him to pay for it. Yet Mrs. Grabmore could buy us out ten times over."

"What an outrage!"

"Then the other night when Mr. Burtonby had promised to take me and the children to town for supper at the hotel and for a long auto ride afterward, Dr. Vandoole phoned over that he had some relatives coming in on the nine o'clock train, and wouldn't Mr. Burtonby pick him up and call for him in our auto? Mr. Burtonby would, in spite of the fact that the same street car line which passes the depot also passes Dr. Vandoole's home. I gave the children a picked-up supper and put them to bed broken-hearted, and my husband gallivanted across town to meet some people who never came, then at Dr. Vandoole's suggestion took Dr. and Mrs. Vandoole for a long ride in the country. I don't believe the Vandooles had any relatives coming. Mr. Burtonby nearly died from his hay fever and used up three dollars' worth of gasoline and five dollars' worth of time to make a Vandoole outing. Then when he got back to the Vandooles' the doctor sprayed his throat to relieve the hay fever and charged two dollars for it!

"Moreover, when I was away last summer and he was keeping house by himself, some woman in the neighborhood—he never would tell me her name—phoned and asked him if he would not take care of her cat and five kittens while she was out of town and he did!"

"I must be going now! When I phoned Mr. Burtonby about the cats I did it because he was such a nice man I knew he would not want them to suffer. Since, however, you——"

"Oh, I didn't know——"

"You knew all the time. Good-by!"

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THE FAIRY CORNER

ACCOUNTED FOR.

I am not feeling well today,
  But why I cannot see.
I had some ice cream 'cross the way
  And pancakes home for tea;

I also had some caramels,
  And sugared almonds, too;
And when I met with Tommy Wells
  A stick of fine tolu.

But I was careful with each one—
  Too much of none I ate.
It cannot be that penny bun,
  And yet the pain is great.

I had six cookies, but I've had
  Six cookies oft before;
They've never left me feeling bad.
  Nor pickles—three or more.

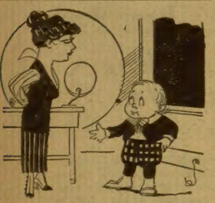
The soda-water couldn't make
  Me ill—'twas Billie's treat.
I sort of think this fearful ache
  Comes wholly from the heat.

Queen Returns.

Of course Queen never should have done such a thing. She had been taught from the time she was old enough to meow that to steal was the lowest, commonest thing that a cat could do. She did not have the excuse of being hungry, for a saucerful of rich milk was standing under the table inviting her to have a drink. She was guilty of theft for no cause beyond her own naughty nature, for she had been reared in the lap of luxury, as had her parents before her.

Yet Queen deliberately stole the fish that lay on the kitchen table waiting to be cooked. From this time forth Queen's descent was swift and not a day passed without there being a stormy scene in the house about some dainty stolen by this pussy.

At last, Miss Mathilda made up her mind that Queen should go. She was given to the washerwoman, where her life was anything but pleasant, owing to skim milk and the washerwoman's babies, who squeezed her and pulled her tail from morning until night. Queen wished again and again that she could have another chance at Miss Mathilda's, but months passed by without that chance making its appearance.



Teacher—"Willie, why did Noah have two animals of the same kind in the ark?"

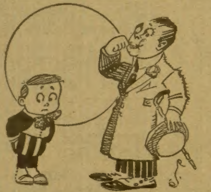
Willie—"Well, if one got lost in the flood he would have the other for the moving pictures."

After Queen's departure quiet reigned at that house. This quiet was not of long duration, for mice soon made their appearance in ones and twos and in whole families. Traps were set, poison used, but still the mice remained. If you had lived near to Miss Mathilda you might have often heard at night sounds like these: "Scat! Go away!" followed by noises made by throwing books and shoes at the whole family of gnawers. Finally Miss Mathilda hit upon the idea of pretending that a cat was in the room. She would loudly "meow" and call "Here, pussy!" in exactly the same way she used to call Queen.

The scheme of Miss Mathilda was successful so far as the immediate departure of the mice was concerned. The weak point about the plan was that Miss Mathilda had to keep calling all the time. This was not the best way to get a good night's rest, and she spent many hours trying to solve the problem. Finally her eyes fell upon a picture of a dog looking into a phonograph, the lettering under the picture telling the reader that the voice issuing forth from the machine was the voice of his master. "The very thing," said Miss Mathilda, and the next day a record was made for "Puss! Puss!" in a much more natural way than any printed words can describe.

Miss Mathilda was delighted and could hardly wait for bedtime to see how her clever plan should succeed.

The mice came out as usual and Miss Mathilda reached out to the little table which stood at the side of her bed and put the machine in motion. "Meow," it went repeating over and over again and "Here, puss," in so natural a way that Miss Mathilda forgot to be afraid of the mice, she was so amused with the doings of her phonograph. The mice scampered back to their holes and Miss Mathilda sank to sleep to the music of "Meow-Meow."



Young Man—"Tommy, tell me what your sister thinks of me and I'll give you a nickel."

Tommy—"Ain't a good laugh worth more'n that?"

You remember, the phonograph stood on a table near an open window. If mice have ears, so have cats. They heard the "meowing" and, what is more, they heard the invitation of "Puss! Puss!" They were not long accepting the invitation and as Miss Mathilda's room was easily reached by a balcony they soon reached it. When that good woman next awoke she did not see a mouse anywhere about, but her room was swarming with cats—cats white, cats black, cat fat and cats thin. One more venturesome than the other jumped up on her bed and Miss Mathilda saw at a glance that this cat was her own Queen—Queen sadly the worse for wear since she had left her happy home for the washerwoman's residence. At first Miss Mathilda could not understand how it happened, nor did she want to. She rang her bell and her maid hurried to the room only to shriek when she saw the company of cats which had taken the places of the company of mice.

In five minutes all of that cat party had been chased out of the window except Queen, whom Miss Mathilda decided to keep as the least of the three evils.

"If I do not keep the phonograph operating I have mice," said Miss Mathilda. "If it does the meowing I have cats, so I think I'll keep Queen. She can attend to the meowing department, while I can do the rest."

And she did. The next day the meow record was sent out in the trash. All the necessary meowing in Miss Mathilda's house from that time on was done by Queen, now a thoroughly reformed and sadly penitent cat.

Jacob Riis.

The children of New York City owe a great deal to Jacob Riis, who has recently died after a long life of good deeds. He helped to wake up that big city to the evils of the dreadful tenement houses in which East Side children live, and presently things were better in that crowded part of New York for children and grownups. Then Mr. Riis set out to see what could be done about a supply of pure water for the city. It wasn't any easy job to bring men of other ideas and interests to think as he did, but after years of struggle it was done, and now they have good safe drinking water in our largest and most crowded city. Then Mr. Riis began on public playgrounds and got them. And altogether he has spent the greater part of thirty years working with tongue and pen for the people of his adopted country. Mr. Riis was born in Denmark, and he has written a book, "The Making of an American," that tells just how his experiences made him an American citizen. It's a great story.

SHEPHERD WIND

The wind, he is a shepherd,
  And every pleasant day
He drives his fleecy lambkins
  Out in the sky to play.
They roam within a pasture
  All beautiful and blue—
I'd like to be a shepherd
  And help to drive them, too.

Paying His Debt.

A canary flew away the other day while his mistress was moving from one house to another, and he was found entertaining a flock of pigeons, singing a solo with all the assurance of a Caruso. These pigeons had rescued him from some fighting sparrows, who had robbed Sir Canary of many of his tailfeathers, and he was repaying them in the best coin he had. The pigeons stood in a circle enraptured, but the soloist was not permitted to give an encore. His song was recognized by a boy from the bird's own home and he was caught and put in his cage in a hurry.

HARNESSING THE RIVERS.

"Little drops of water,
  Little grains of sand,
Make the mighty ocean
  And the beauteous land."
Little drops of water
  From the sea arise
By evaporation
  Up into the skies.
Little drops of water,
  In the form of rain,
Presently are coming
  Back to earth again.
Little drops of water
  Soak into the sand,
Making creeks and rivers
  All throughout the land.
Little drops of water
  In the rivers run
Over falls and rapids
  Sparkling in the sun.
Little drops of water
  Don't seem very strong
In the falls and rapids
  As they dash along.
Little drops of water,
  Just the same are those
Which, combined together,
  Run the dynamos.
Little drops of water
  Every day and hour
Gath'ring for the struggle
  Make electric power.
Little drops of water,
  Tiny at their source,
Bring to man the wonders
  Of a mighty force.
Little drops of water,
  Little grains of sand
Don't know any better,
  They can't understand.

Long Bill.

Mr. Longfellow and Mr. Appleton, traveling together in Switzerland, finally reached Zurich, where the landlord put the heaviest possible price on everything supplied for their comfort and amusement. When leaving Mr. Appleton wrote his name meekly on the books and paid at once.

"I have put my name on the books," said Longfellow, "and if you will allow me, I will treat this innkeeper as he deserves."

The name of the inn was the Raven. He took the book aside and wrote these lines:

"Beware of the Raven of Zurich.
'Tis a bird of omen ill,
With an ugly, unclean nest
And a very, very long bill!"

The landlord, who could not read English, proudly preserved the great poet's verse.

Conundrums.

What is that which no man ever yet did see, which never was, but always is to be? Tomorrow.

On what day of the year may a man be said to breakfast before he gets up? When he takes a roll in bed.

When is corn like the earth? When it is ground.

Can you make five less by adding to it? Yes; thus, IV.

Would Be Clean.

"Herbert," said a thoughtful mother, your Uncle Ed will be here for dinner today. Go upstairs and wash your face."

"Yes, mother," replied the boy, "but s'posen he don't come. What then?"

Shipped FREE!

The New "ARROW"

Write for free catalog. The new 1915 Arrow shipped to you at our risk without a penny down. If you are not delighted send it back at our expense. It costs you nothing.

Pay as You Ride

Electric Light Easy motorcycle saddle—New coaster brake—motorcycle mud guards, stand and parcel rack—motorcycle pedals—long rubber grip, motorcycle handle bars—complete tool kit and tire pump—re-inforced motorcycle frame. Fisk Red Tread Clincher Tires—beautiful finish. Write TODAY.

If you keep the Arrow, pay the 30-day reduced price, a small amount each month while you ride. New 1915 features—motorcycle type. All sizes—boys, men, women.

Write Today Get the new Arrow catalog free and rock-bottom offer. Write NOW.

ARROW CYCLE CO. Dept 5013 California Ave. & 19th St. Chicago

YOUR HEART

Does it Flutter, Palpitate or Skip Beats? Have you Shortness of Breath, Tenderness, Numbness or Pain in left side, Dizziness, Fainting Spells, Spots before eyes, Sudden Starting in sleep, Nervousness, Nightmare, Hungry or Weak Spells, Oppressed Feeling in chest, Choking Sensation in throat, Painful to lie on left side, Cold Hands or Feet, Difficult Breathing, Heart Dropsy, Swelling of feet or ankles, or Neuralgia around heart? If you have one or more of the above symptoms, don't fail to use Dr. Kinsman's Guaranteed Heart Tablets. Not a secret medicine. It is said that one person out of every four has a weak heart. Three-fourths of these do not know it, and hundreds wrongfully treat themselves for the Stomach, Lungs, Kidneys or Nerves. Don't take any chances when Dr. Kinsman's Heart Tablets are within your reach. 1000 endorsements furnished.

FREE TREATMENT COUPON
Any sufferer mailing this coupon, with their name and P. O. Address, to Dr. F. G. Kinsman, Box 951, Augusta, Maine, will receive a box of Heart Tablets for trial by return mail, postpaid, free of charge. Delays are dangerous. Write at once—to-day.

WAR ON DISEASE

DR. FOOTE'S PLAIN HOME TALK tells how to do this, how to get well, keep well, strong and vigorous. How to marry Eugenically, be happy and have strong, healthy, good children. Answers 1001 questions, many of which we don't like to ask even a doctor, but that all need to know. Contains over 1200 pages, 330 illustrations, with 80 lithographs in 5 colors. YOUNG and OLD, MALE and FEMALE, MARRIED or SINGLE, should read it. SEND FOR 128 PAGE PAMPHLET FREE Also contents table of this wonderful book on SOCIAL and SEXUAL SCIENCE. Send 3 cents to cover postage.
Murray Hill Pub. Co., 120 B Lexington Ave., New York

DON'T BE BASHFUL

ARE YOU TIMID OR SELF-CONSCIOUS?

Do you blush, lose your nerve and become confused easily? Are you bashful and unsuccessful in love, social or business affairs? My Illustrated FREE TREATISE tells how these faults may be promptly and permanently overcome. Write for it TODAY. M. DeBETTS, Station 19, Jackson, Michigan

BIRTH STONE RINGS FREE
$1.00 value, solid 14K Gold Shell, guaranteed for 5 years, with stone for any month, simply to introduce our Jewelry Catalog De Luxe. Send 10c to cover cost of Advertising and mailing, send size. GUARANTEE JEWELRY CO., Dept. 4-1, Tyrone, Pa.

BE A DETECTIVE

Earn from $150.00 to $300.00 per month; travel over the world. Write C. T. LUDWIG, 120 Westover Building, KANSAS CITY, MO.

ASTHMA REMEDY sent to you on FREE TRIAL. If it cures, send $1.00; if not, don't. Give express office. Write today. W. K. Sterline, 836 Ohio Ave., Sidney, Ohio.

Sister: Read My Free Offer!

I am a woman.
I know a woman's trials.
I know her need of sympathy and help.

If you, my sister, are unhappy because of ill-health, if you feel unfit for household duties, social pleasures, or daily employment, write and tell me just how you suffer, and ask for my free ten days' trial of a home treatment suited to your needs. Men cannot understand women's sufferings. What we women know from experience, we know better than any man. I want to tell you how to cure yourself at home at a cost of about 12 cents a week.

If you suffer from women's peculiar ailments causing pain in the head, back, or bowels, feeling of weight and dragging down sensation, falling or displacement of pelvic organs, causing kidney and bladder weakness or constipation and piles, painful or irregular periods, catarrhal conditions and discharges, extreme nervousness, depressed spirits, melancholy, desire to cry, fear of something evil about to happen, creeping feeling along the spine, palpitation, hot flashes, weariness, sallow complexion with dark circles under the eyes, pain in the left breast or a general feeling that life is not worth living,

I INVITE YOU TO SEND TODAY FOR MY FREE TEN DAYS' TREATMENT

and learn how these ailments can be easily and surely conquered at home without the dangers and expense of an operation. When you are cured, and able to enjoy life again, you can pass the good word along to some other sufferer. My home treatment is for young or old. To Mothers of Daughters, I will explain how to overcome green sickness (chlorosis), irregularities, headaches, and lassitude in young women and restore them to plumpness and health. Tell me if you are worried about your daughter. Remember it costs you nothing to give my home treatment a ten days' trial, and does not interfere with daily work. If health is worth asking for, then accept my generous offer and write for the free treatment, including my illustrated booklet, "Women's Own Medical Adviser." I will send all in plain wrappers postpaid. To save time, you can cut out this offer, mark your feelings, and return to me. Send today, as you may not see this offer again. Address,
MRS. M. SUMMERS, 457 E. WASHINGTON AVE., SOUTH BEND, IND.

The LEDGER'S EMBROIDERY CORNER.

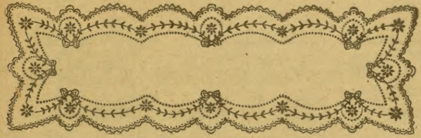
We call the attention of every woman to the beauty of the patterns displayed from week to week, and wish to impress upon each one the splendid quality of material that makes our offer a great bargain in every case. Every offer is complete. You can finish it up without buying anything extra.

These designs are already stamped on best quality cloth, and every set comes to you complete, exactly as described.

You are sure to find many articles that you want if you watch the Ledger each week, and it is so easy to get them, every woman should have little trouble in getting almost every one.

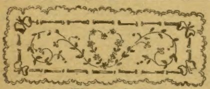
Every one of the designs we are going to offer is new and up-to-date, and nowhere else can you secure the same, as they are made exclusively for us.

Canada—Single subscriptions, $1.50; Blade and Ledger, $3.00 the year.



No. 17 P. B., Linen Dresser Scarf.

NO. 17 P. B., LINEN DRESSER SCARF.—The pretty scarf illustrated here was made especially for us, and we believe that any woman will be proud of having such a beautiful piece on her dresser. We will send you this beautiful scarf stamped on white Irish linen, size 18x54 inches, for a $1.00, new or renewal, subscription to the Blade or the Ledger.



No. 1733, Pin Cushion.

NO. 1733, PIN CUSHION.—Stamped on real white Irish linen, size 9x16 inches, including four skeins of cotton floss. Given with a $1.00 year's subscription to either the Blade or the Ledger.

Hone Your Own Razor

It's easy with this new Perforated Hone. The holes prevent "wire-edge"—no skill needed. Try one 30 days Free. Send no money. If it makes your old razor shave like new send 50c.
PERFORATED HONE CO.,
Sta. B-2 Haverhill, Mass.

Old Coins WANTED. $1 to $600 paid for hundreds of coins dated before 1894. Send 10c for our Ill. Coin Value Book. It may mean your fortune. OLD COIN CO., 808 EAST 61st ST., CHICAGO

Knit Wool Shawls

Free WHITE or RED

We are going to give these shawls away to our readers.

The shawls are made of woolen yarn. They come in two colors, white or red. These shawls can be used in many ways; as a shoulder shawl, like that shown in the cut, or they can be used to throw over the head.

These shawls are large and well made, and we want every reader of this paper to have one of them, so we will send you one FREE OF ALL CHARGE, if you will enclose $1.00 for a year's subscription to this paper.

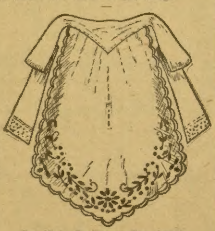
We send the shawl all charges prepaid. Be sure to state whether you want white or red.

This is a splendid offer, and we are glad to be able to distribute these shawls among our readers.

We treat old and new subscribers alike on this splendid offer. If you are already a subscriber say so when you write, and we will have your new subscription commence when the old one expires.

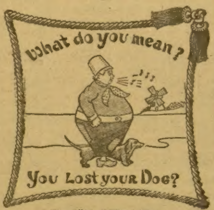
Cut out this adv. and send to the Blade and Ledger, 500 N. Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

Canada sub. price $1.50 per year.



No. 35 P. B., Fancy Tea Apron.

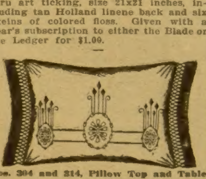
NO. 35 P. B., FANCY TEA APRON.—This apron is stamped on fine quality white Irish linen and includes strings for same. Given for a $1.00 subscription to the Blade or the Ledger.



What do you mean?
You Lost your Dog?

No. 1501, Pillow Top.

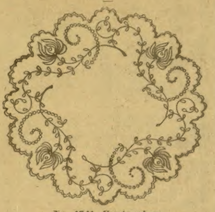
NO. 1501, TINTED PILLOW TOP.—On ecru art ticking, size 21x21 inches, including tan Holland linene back and six skeins of colored floss. Given with a year's subscription to either the Blade or the Ledger for $1.00.



Nos. 304 and 314, Pillow Top and Table Scarf.

NO. 304, TINTED PILLOW TOP.—On pure Russian crash, size 17x22 inches, including tan Holland linene back and four skeins of colored floss. Given with a year's subscription to either the Blade or the Ledger for $1.00.

NO. 314, TINTED LIBRARY TABLE SCARF.—On pure linen Russian crash, size 17x54 inches. Matches No. 304 pillow top. Six skeins of colored floss included with scarf. Given with a year's subscription to the Blade and Ledger for $2.00.



No. 1741, Centerpiece.

NO. 1741, CENTERPIECE.—Stamped on real white Irish linen, size 18x18 inches, including four skeins of cotton floss. Given with a year's subscription to the Blade or the Ledger for $1.00.

Same design stamped on real white Irish linen, size 36x36 inches, including six skeins of cotton floss. Given with a year's subscription to the Blade and Ledger for $2.00.

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There's no use paying a jeweler a big profit. Save that by buying direct from our catalog of wonderful bargains. Write NOW.
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We give beautifully engraved, latest style, thin model, ladies' small or gents' size hunting or open case WATCH. Fine time keeper, guaranteed 5 years, solid composition metal case, looks and wears like gold. Also lady's Diamond Ring and Handsome Chain, ALL FREE. Just order 20 pkgs. of our high grade gold-eyed needles, sell at 10c each. Silver aluminum Thimble free with each pkg. Extra present if you order now.
IDEAL WATCH CO. Dept. M441 ELMIRA, N.Y.

FREE "Linene" COLLAR
State size on postal and whether you want collar like cut or low turnover style. REVERSIBLE COLLAR CO. Department E, BOSTON, MASS.

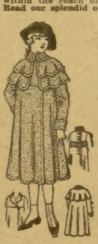
6 LACE CURTAINS FREE
For selling 12 boxes White Cloverine Salve at 25c per box. Give beautiful picture free with each box. Everybody buys 2 to 3 boxes when you show pictures. Send for one dozen today.
WILSON CHEMICAL CO., Dept. 14, Tyrone, Pa.

PATTERN COUPONS FREE!

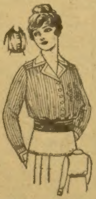
Hundreds of Patterns to Select From

The great difficulty in making one's own garments is to get suitable patterns. Our women readers could make many pretty and useful things for themselves and their children if they could get well-made patterns. We have arranged to give our readers a pattern service unexcelled.

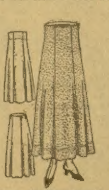
We have a splendid offer of the best and most fashionable patterns that can be produced by the greatest designers of New York and Paris, and what is more, these patterns will be within the reach of every one, and every one will have a wide selection to choose from. **Read our splendid offer below.**



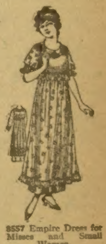
8560 Girl's Empire Coat, 8 to 14 years.



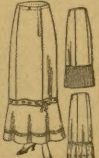
8575 Blouse with Full Fronts. 34 to 42 bust.



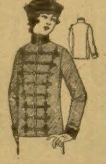
8500-A Six-Piece Skirt for Misses and Small Women, 16 and 18 years.



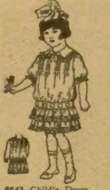
8557 Empire Dress for Misses and Small Women, 16 and 18 years.



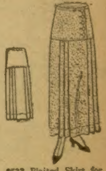
8554 Four-Gored Petticoat, 24 to 34 waist.



8553 Military Coat for Misses and Small Women, 16 and 18 years.



8543 Child's Dress, 2 4 and 6 years.



8533 Plaited Skirt for Misses and Small Women, 16 and 18 years.

HOW TO GET THE FREE PATTERNS

Here is the way we will do it. To every one who will send us one dollar for a year's subscription to the Chicago Ledger we will send absolutely free five pattern coupons. Each coupon will be good for one pattern and you can select the patterns from those illustrated in any issue of the Chicago Ledger. When you see a pattern that you like all you have to do is to send us a coupon and it will be sent to you at once. In this way you will have hundreds of patterns from which to pick the five that you will be entitled to, and you have all the time you need to pick out the ones you want.

These patterns are the best that can be made. Each pattern gives full directions for the cutting and making with information as to the amount of cloth required, etc., so that any one can make any of the designs illustrated with no trouble at all. At the same time, they are so stylish and accurately cut that dressmakers and seamstresses all over the country will be quick to take advantage of this liberal offer. Some will subscribe for two years so they can get ten coupons. These designs are made by the best designers and modists of New York and Paris, and are up-to-the-minute in fashion and beauty.

We treat old and new customers alike on this splendid offer. If you are already a subscriber send in a dollar and we will send you the five pattern coupons and extend your subscription one year from the time it now expires.

To get these five coupons entitling you to five patterns, fill out the blank below and enclose it with one dollar for a year's subscription to the Chicago Ledger. Do this now—today! No woman should be without the Ledger's Pattern Coupon Book. Be among the thousands of women who will get these coupons.

.... CUT THIS OUT AND SEND TO US ....

THE CHICAGO LEDGER, 500 N. Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

Enclosed please find one dollar for a year's subscription to the Chicago Ledger. This entitles me to Five Pattern Coupons. **Canada Subscription Price $1.50 per year.**

NAME..
Street No.
or R. F. D..
Box.............Town...
This is a..........................Subscription. State........................
(New or Renewal)

If you wish any pattern from those advertised in this issue, mark the number and size on the margin and we will retain a coupon for each pattern we send you when we send you the Coupon Book. (Order by size and number.) Coupons good for six months.

Storyettes

Why He Stopped the Train.

Chauncey M. Depew, at a Peekskill dinner, was talking about a certain antiquated railroad.

"Its manager," he said, "seems almost as absurd as the farmer.

"A farmer lived on a lonely place and eventually a railroad was run through the district. There was one train a day and it stopped at the farmer's station on signal.

"The farmer one day set the signal and the train drew up. But he did not climb aboard.

"'Well, get on!' shouted the conductor. 'Get on, can't ye?'

"'Excuse me,' said the farmer. 'I don't want to get on. I only want to say that you are to stop here at this time tomorrow as my wife is going to town to do some shopping.'"

◆

Thinking of It.

The Rev. James Hamilton, minister, of Liverpool, while on holiday in Scotland, had a narrow escape from drowning. Accompanied by a boy, Mr. Hamilton was fishing for sea trout, when he slipped on a stone, lost his balance, and, being incumbered with heavy wading boots, had great difficulty in keeping his head above water. Finally he managed to get back to the shore, although in a very exhausted state, and said to the boy:

"I noticed that you never tried to help me."

"Na," was the deliberate response, "but I was thinkin' o't."

◆

Going to the Doctor.

An old man who looked like a foreigner was walking along a London street playing a concertina that had seen better days. Noticing a brass plate with the words "Doctor of Music" written under the name on it, he went up to the house and rang the bell. The door was answered by a servant, who asked his business.

"Please," he said, "is the doctor o' music in?"

"Yes; what is it you want?" the servant asked.

"Why, just pop in an' ax him how much he'll charge to mend my concertina," was the reply.

◆

Standing Room Only.

Harper Pennington has revealed the origin of the "standing room only" joke: It appears that there was hardly ever any furniture in Whistler's house. He was peculiarly parsimonious in the matter of chairs. This led to a remark of Corny Grain's which became famous.

"Ah, Jimmy! Glad to see you playing to such a full house!" said Dick (Corny) Grain when shaking hands before a Sunday luncheon, while glaring around the studio with his large, protruding eyes, in search of something to sit on.

"What do you mean?" asked Whistler.

"Standing room only," replied the actor.

◆

Mistook the Motive.

A Western preacher tells of a marriage ceremony he performed for a couple from a small town. After all was completed the couple evinced no disposition to leave the chancel. So the clergyman held out his hand, shook hands with the bride and then held out his hand to the bridegroom. The latter had his fist deep in his trousers pocket, and as the minister stood with his hand out, he said, somewhat impatiently and in a tone that could be heard all over the church:

"Well, I am getting the money out as fast as I can!"

◆

His Alarm Clock.

Senator Ollie James told of a young man in Louisville who not long since hung up his shingle as attorney at law.

One afternoon a friend, upon entering the office, observed upon the desk of the new legal light a dollar alarm clock.

"That's a good idea," said the friend. "One is very apt to oversleep these mornings."

The youthful attorney smiled sadly. "This alarm clock was not bought for the reason you mention," said he. "I merely keep it here to wake me when it is time to go home."

◆

He Approved.

A man's animosity toward a political opponent is sometimes so bitter that it does not cease even when the opponent is dead. A gentleman who had figured prominently suddenly came to the end of a long and useful life. On the day of the funeral one of the strongest political enemies of the deceased was asked:

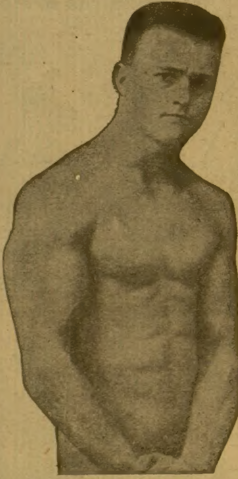
"Are you going to attend Mr. ——'s funeral today?"

"No," responded the distinguished gentleman, deliberately, "but I wish you to understand I heartily approve of it."

Let Us Make You Fat

REAL FLESH BUILDER FOUND AT LAST

"Gains 22 Pounds in 23 Days"



A PLUMP, STRONG, ROBUST BODY

50c BOX FREE

To enable any thin reader, 10 pounds or more under weight, to easily make this test, we will give a 50c box of Sargol absolutely free. Either Sargol will increase your weight or it won't and the only way to know is to try it. Send for this Free Test Package today, enclosing 10c in silver or stamps to help pay postage, packing, etc., and a full size 50c package will be sent by return mail free of charge. Mail this coupon with your letter to the SARGOL CO., 100-D HERALD BLDG., BINGHAMTON, N. Y.

Remarkable Story Told by F. Gagnon.
Builds Up Weight Wonderfully.

"I was all run down to the very bottom," writes F. Gagnon. "I had to quit work, I was so weak. Now, thanks to Sargol, I look like a new man. I gained 22 pounds in 23 days."

"Sargol has put 10 pounds on me in 14 days," states W. D. Roberts. "It has made me sleep well, enjoy what I ate and enabled me to work with interest and pleasure."

"Before I took Sargol people called me 'skinny,' but now my name is changed. My whole figure is different, my face is plump and full, my body is stout. Have gained 15 pounds, and am gaining yet. I look like a new man," declared another gentleman who had just finished the Sargol treatment.

Would you, too, like to quickly put from 10 to 30 pounds of good, solid, healthy, "stay there" flesh, fat and muscular tissue between your skin and bones?

Don't say it can't be done. Try it. Let us send you free a 50c package of Sargol and prove what it can do for you.

When hundreds of men and women—and there are hundreds, with more coming every day—living in every nook and corner of this broad land voluntarily testify to weight increases ranging all the way from 10 to 35 pounds given them by Sargol, you must admit, Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Thin Reader, that there must be something in this Sargol method of flesh-building after all.

More than half a million thin men and women have gladly made this FREE TEST that we now offer you; and that Sargol does succeed, does make thin folks fat, even where all else has failed, is best proved by the tremendous business we have done.

Sargol has put pounds of healthy "stay there" flesh on hundreds who doubted, and in spite of their doubts. You don't have to believe in Sargol to grow plump from its use. You just take it and watch weight pile up, hollows vanish, and your figure round out to pleasing and normal proportions. You weigh yourself when you begin and again when you finish and you let the scales tell the story.

Sargol is a tiny concentrated tablet. You take one with every meal. It mixes with the food you eat for the purpose of separating all of its flesh producing ingredients. It prepares these fat-making elements in an easily assimilated form, which the blood can readily absorb and carry all over your body. Plump, well-developed persons don't need Sargol to produce this result. Their assimilative machinery performs its functions without aid. But thin folks' assimilative organs do not. This fatty portion of their food now goes to waste through their bodies like unburned coal through an open grate. A few days' test of Sargol in your case will surely prove whether or not this is true of you. Isn't it worth trying?

COME, EAT WITH US AT OUR EXPENSE.

This coupon entitles any person to one 50c package of Sargol, the concentrated Flesh Builder (provided you have never tried it), and that 10c is enclosed to cover postage, packing, etc. Read our advertisement printed above, and then put 10c in silver in letter today, with coupon and the full 50c package will be sent you by return post. Address: **The Sargol Company, 100-D Herald Bldg., Binghamton, N. Y.** Write your name and address plainly and PIN THIS COUPON TO YOUR LETTER.